00031474

00031474

Digitized with financial assistance from

H T Parekh
FOUNDATION

An Initiative by
HDFC
WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 28 December, 2018

CONTEMPORARY FRANCE

After the painting by Chartier

The Duc d'Audiffret Pasquier

CONTEMPORARY FRANCE

BY

GABRIEL HANOTAUX

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

31474

With Portraits

VOL. III

(1874–1877)

TT. H. 2.

LONDON
ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE & CO. LTD.
1907

Har, Cir
31474

RICHARD CLAY & SONS, LIMITED,
BREAD STREET HILL, E.C., AND
BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE

PAGE

I. Relative Position of the Parties at the Fall of the First Broglie Cabinet.—Failure of the Goulard Combination.—Formation of the Cissey-Fourtou Cabinet, 12th May, 1874.—The Bonapartist Party.—Parliamentary Electorate, Municipal Electorate; First Reading of the Bill.—Universal Suffrage.—Union of the Centres . . . 1

II. The Bonapartist Danger.—The Lefts accept the Constituent Power.—Second Reading of the Municipal Electorate Bill.—Constitutional Proposals.—First Republican victory; Urgency voted on the Casimir-Perier Proposal.—First Reading of the Municipal Organisation Bill 16

III. The Comte de Chambord's Manifesto, 2nd July, 1874.—The Lucien Brun Interpellation.—The Cissey Cabinet beaten.—Message from the Marshal, 9th July, 1874 31

IV. Ministerial Constitutional Programme.—Bill of the Committee of Thirty.—The Casimir-Perier Motion Discussed and Rejected.—Adjournment of the Constitutional Debate.—The State of Siege Maintained.—The Assembly adjourns from the 5th August to the 30th November, 1874 38

CHAPTER II

THE SEPTENNATE—FRANCE AND EUROPE

I. Practical Activity of the Assembly.—The Budget of 1875.—Various Military Measures.—Great Public Works.—The Phylloxera.—Social Questions and Parliamentary Inquiry on Labour.—The Roussel Law on Child Protection.—Reform of the *Baccalauréat* . 56

II. External Politics.—German Diplomacy in 1874.—The 'Ischl Meetings.—The Kissingen Affair and the Ultramontane Question.—The Decree of Cardinal Guibert.—Recall of the *Orénoque*.—Spanish Affairs.—A German Intervention Feared.—Difficulties between Paris and Madrid.—The Alfonsist Restoration.—Rivalry between Prince Gortschakoff and Prince Bismarck.—Eastern Affairs.—First outlines of a Franco-Russian Alliance.—Attitude of Great Britain.—The Suez Canal and the Egyptian Question.—The

Tonquin Affair.—Policy of the United States.—International Arbitration.—The Brussels Conference and International Law.—International Sanitary Police 73

III. Society in 1874.—Parliamentary Holidays.—The Marshal's Journeys.—Parliamentary Bye-elections.—Departmental and Municipal Elections.—Return of the Assembly.—Position of Parties.—Presidential Message.—First Reading of the Law on Higher Education.—The Assembly Votes for a Parliamentary Inquiry on Bonapartist Proceedings 105

CHAPTER III

THE REPUBLIC FOUNDED

I. Preparations for the Debate on the Constitution.—The Committee of Thirty takes the Initiative.—Conference at Élysée.—Parliamentary Session Resumed.—Message from the President (5th January, 1875).—The Government demands Priority for the Senate Bill.—It is refused: Resignation of the Cabinet.—Provisional arrangements 124

II. First Reading of the Bill for the Organisation of Public Powers.—First Debate on the Bill for the Creation of a Senate 133

III. Second Debate on the Bill for the Organisation of Public Powers.—Sittings of the 28th, 29th, and 30th January.—Solemn Debate on Clause I.—M. Laboulaye's Amendment.—M. Louis Blanc intervenes.—The Laboulaye Amendment is rejected.—The Wallon Amendment.—Negotiations of the Lavergne Group.—M. Desjardins' Proposition is rejected.—The Wallon Amendment is voted by a Majority of One.—Consequences of that Vote . . 143

IV. Second Debate on the Public Powers Bill continued.—Dissolution and the Revision of Constitutional Laws suggested.—The Seat of Public Powers remains fixed at Versailles.—Second Debate on the Senate Bill.—The Pascal Duprat Amendment voted.—Declarations of the Committee of Thirty and of the Government.—Dissolution demanded.—General confusion 163

V. The Right offers the Dictatorship to the Marshal.—The Duc de Broglie refuses to form a Cabinet.—The Right against M. Buffet.—The Lavergne Group intervenes between the Two Centres.—The Marshal gives up the right to appoint Life Senators.—Agreement concluded.—The Senate Law and the Public Powers Law carried 177

CHAPTER IV

THE BUFFET CABINET AND THE 1875 SCARE

I. Parliamentary Inquiry into the Bonapartist Plot.—Bye-elections.—The Cissey Cabinet resigns.—Formation of the Buffet Ministry.—

The Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier President of the Assembly.—Uncertain Policy of M. Buffet.—The Assembly adjourns from the 20th March to the 11th May.—Gambetta's Ménilmontant Speech . 195

II. The 1875 Scare.—Germany and Europe.—German Press Campaign against France.—Rumours of War.—The Duc Decazes appeals to the Powers.—M. de Gontaut-Biron and Herr v. Radowitz.—Steps taken by Count Schuwaloff at Berlin.—Prince Hohenlohe and the Duc Decazes.—An article in the *Times*.—England, Austria and Italy intervene.—Change of front in Germany.—The Czar in Berlin.—Russian Circular to the Powers; peace secured.—Conclusions to be drawn from the 1875 incident 210

III. The National Assembly resumes its sittings.—Bye-elections suppressed.—Complementary Constitutional Bills.—The New Committee of Thirty.—The Higher Education Bill.—The Nièvre election and the Committee of the Appeal to the People.—M. Buffet and the Left.—The Organic Law on the relations between Public Powers and the Senatorial Electoral Law carried.—The 1876 Budget.—The Assembly adjourns from the 4th August to the 4th November, 1875 260

CHAPTER V

THEORY OF THE CONSTITUTION

I. General character of the Constitution of 1875.—Analogy between it and the American Constitution 283

II. Precedents.—French Constitutions since the Revolution.—Montesquieu, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Condorcet.—Constitutional experiments of the Revolution.—Imperial Dictatorship.—Return to the Legitimity.—Popular Sovereignty imposed upon the Restoration.—Antinomies of the 1848 Constitution.—Advent of Democratic Cæsarism.—Democracy and the Republic . 289

III. Doctrines: Aug. Comte, Proudhon, Tocqueville, Duc de Broglie, Prévost-Paradol—Theories of Parliamentarism.—Influence of political literature on the National Assembly.—Decentralisation 312

IV. Theory of the Constitution.—Popular Sovereignty.—The law of majorities.—Universal Suffrage.—The Rights of Ministers.—National Unity.—Unity and Liberty reconciled.—Hatred of Personal Power.—A Representative System.—A Parliamentary Republic.—Two Chambers.—The Presidency of the Republic.—The Cabinet.—Reign of public opinion.—History and the Constitution of 1875.—Its Merits and Defects 324

CHAPTER VI

THE DEATH-THROES OF THE ASSEMBLY

I. The Summer Vacation, August 1874.—The Conservative Policy of M. Buffet becomes marked.—Ministerial Dissensions.—Instructions from the Comte de Chambord.—M. Rouher's Speech.—M. Thiers at Arcachon.—Letter from Gambetta to the Democrats of Lyons . 363

II. Last Session of the National Assembly.—The Legislative Electoral Law.—Gambetta breaks with the Right Centre.—M. Buffet reconstitutes the Majority of the 24th May.—The Law of the 30th November, 1875, is passed.—Electoral Districts . . 372

III. Election of Life Senators.—First Ballot; the Right and the Left neutralise each other.—Compact between the Extreme Right, the Bonapartists, and the Left.—The 75 Life Senators. 392

IV. Death-Throes of the Assembly. The Committee of Pardons.—Proposal of Amnesty.—Martial Law and the *Régime* of the Press.—Relative Position of the Parties.—Last Days of the Assembly.—Dissolution.—Criticism on the National Assembly. 403

CHAPTER VII

FRANCE AND THE ELECTIONS OF 1876

I. Universal Suffrage.—The Nation and the Parties.—Electoral Organisation.—The Cabinet and the Elections.—Composition of the Senate 420

II. Legislative Elections.—Candidates and Programmes.—Gambetta leads the Campaign; Speeches at Lille, Bordeaux and Paris.—The Ballot of the 21st February, 1876, is favourable to the Republic 445

III. M. Buffet Resigns; M. Dufaure is provisionally entrusted with the Presidency of the Council.—Gambetta's Speech at Lyons.—Second Ballots.—Composition of the Chamber of Deputies.—Formalities for the Transmission of Powers.—Early Sittings of the Chamber and of the Senate 464

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST DUFAURE CABINET

I. First Session.—The Majority.—M. Dufaure, his Character and Situation.—Constitution of the Dufaure Cabinet.—The Ministerial Address.—Divisions in the Majority.—Tactics of the Extreme Left.—Gambetta Chairman of the Finance Committee.—First Republican Laws 474

II. Administrative Changes.—Death of M. Ricard; M. de Marcère succeeds him.—Debate on the Amnesty.—Supplementary Elections.—The right of Revision discussed by the Senate.—Modification by the Chamber of the Higher Education Law.—M. Buffet is made a Life Senator 498

III. Party Excitement.—The Mayors' Law Voted by the Chamber.—Jules Ferry and Gambetta disagree.—Rejection by the Senate of the amended Education Bill.—Conflict between the two Chambers.—The 1877 Budget.—General de Cissey resigns and is succeeded by General Berthaut.—End of the ordinary Session.—Holidays.—Bye-Elections.—Marshal MacMahon at the Army Manœuvres 513

IV. The Vatican Incident.—France and Italy.—Political Speeches.—The Paris Labour Congress.—The Extraordinary Session of 1876.—Cessation of Prosecutions subsequent to the Commune.—Fiscal Reform.—The Budget.—M. Chesnelong becomes a Life Senator.—The Senate rejects the Bill on the Commune Prosecutions.—Fall of the Dufaure Ministry 526

CHAPTER IX

THE JULES SIMON CABINET AND THE 16TH MAY

I. Reasons for the fall of the Dufaure Ministry.—Last efforts to bring about the Union of the Centres —Ministerial Crisis.—The Jules Simon Ministry.—M. Jules Simon and the Chamber.—Cold Reception from the Left.—M. Jules Simon and M. Gambetta.—The Financial Rights of the Senate.—The 1877 Budget voted . 542

II. First Acts of the Chamber.—The Administrative *Personnel*.—Re-opening of the Session.—Momentary calm —Policy of the Left Centre.—Gambetta re-elected Chairman of the Budget Committee.—Tactics of the Extreme Left.—Difficult position of M. Jules Simon.—Ministerial Incidents.—Republican Programme . 566

III. The Religious Question.—Pope Pius IX and M. Jules Simon.—Easter Holidays 591

IV. Interpellation concerning Ultramontane Intrigues.—Speeches from MM. Jules Simon and Gambetta 596

V. The Marshal decides to break with the Left Majority.—The Municipal Organisation Law and the Press Law 609

VI. The Letter of the 16th May.—Resignation of the Cabinet.—The President's Policy 613

INDEX 623

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

THE DUC D'AUDIFFRET-PASQUIER (*after the painting by Chaplain*) *Frontispiece*

HENRI WALLON (*after the painting by Bastien Lepage*) . *To face p.* 161

LOUIS BUFFET (*after the painting by Monchablon*) . . . „ 367

HISTORY OF

CONTEMPORARY FRANCE

CHAPTER I

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE

I. Relative position of political parties at the fall of the first Broglie Cabinet. —Failure of the Goulard combination.—Formation of the Cissey-Fourtou Cabinet, 12th May, 1874.—The Bonapartist Party.—Parliamentary Electorate, Municipal Electorate; first Reading of the Bill.—Universal Suffrage.—Union of the Centres.

II. The Bonapartist danger.—The Lefts accept the Constituent Power.—Second Reading of the Municipal Electorate Bill.—Constitutional proposals.—First Republican Victory; urgency voted on the Casimir-Périer proposal.—First Reading of the Municipal Organisation Bill.

III. The Comte de Chambord's Manifesto, 2nd July, 1874.—The Lucien Brun Interpellation.—The Cissey Cabinet beaten.—Message from the Marshal, 9th July, 1874.

IV. Ministerial Constitutional Programme.—Bill of the Committee of Thirty. —The Casimir-Perier motion discussed and rejected.—Adjournment of the Constitutional Debate.—The state of siege maintained.—The Assembly adjourns from the 5th August to the 30th November, 1874.

I

THREE years had passed since the National Assembly first met at Bordeaux. It had concluded peace with Germany; it had repressed a formidable insurrection. It had then assumed the constituent power; but it had failed to give a Constitution to the country.

The Right Majority was rent between three monarchical parties. These divisions favoured the Republic, which existed in fact.

On the 24th May, 1873, the Right had overthrown M. Thiers, believing him to be the principal obstacle to the restoration of the Dynasty.

A year later, on the 16th May, 1874, the Duc de Broglie was set aside in his turn, and the National Assembly, powerless and disorganised, found itself face to face with the country.

M. Thiers' Government had been but a provisional dictatorship, specially entrusted with the liquidation of the results of the war.

Situation of the parties after the fall of the Broglie Cabinet.

The Cabinet over which the Duc de Broglie presided had received from the Right a tacit mandate to bring about a fusion between the two Royalist parties and a conditional restoration of the Bourbon dynasty. But the Comte de Chambord, by his letter dated 27th October, 1873, had ruined his own chances and destroyed the hopes of the party of Parliamentary Monarchy; the votes of his partisans had contributed to the downfall of the Cabinet which represented that system.

In fact, the majority in the Assembly was now without a system, or, to speak more accurately, there was now no majority in the Assembly. The Duc de Broglie had been beaten by a coalition which comprised the Extreme Right, the Bonapartists and some Republicans, that is: all the parties which, either in the name of Divine Right, or in the name of Popular Right, refused to admit that the Assembly had the power of constitution. The Assembly was therefore driven to have recourse to the country, and to that Universal Suffrage by which it had been elected.

This was clearly explained by M. Thiers, with his habitual lucidity and logical precision, in a speech uttered on the 24th May, 1874. "Let us hope that, after recent experiences, the Assembly will accept, like ourselves, the

necessity of appealing to the country as to the supreme arbiter of the disagreements by which it is divided. . . . From the moment when it offers no working majority, it can no longer govern, and, when it cannot do so, it has no longer the right to attempt it."[1]

But logic is not a law in politics, and Parliaments do not like the sound of the word Dissolution. The Right cherished a deep conviction that a special mandate of salvation had been conferred upon it by the country. Before again facing Universal Suffrage, it was anxious to limit the share of liberty and sovereignty which it was expedient to allow the People, from whom, and for whom, much was to be feared.

In order to postpone the inevitable event of a great electoral appeal, that strange *régime* of the Septennate had been invented, in reality a mere procrastination. Again, in spite of the ironical warnings of M. Thiers, men's eyes were closed to the natural consequences of the downfall of the Duc de Broglie, and, if a neutral combination was sought for in the constitution of the new Cabinet, it was in the hope that this would afford an ephemeral respite.

The most numerous and influential portion of the Left lent itself to this policy. The Left Centre, taught by its own evolutions, appreciated the monarchical feelings of the Right, anticipating that sooner or later—perhaps in a weak moment—the latter would yield a more or less frank adhesion to Republican institutions. Thus would it be possible to keep the old Republican party within bounds, and to guard against the frankly Democratic tendencies which, as each by-election showed, began to pervade the country. M. Laboulaye, one of the most active, most wily promoters of this double-faced policy, by which the *bourgeoisie* was playing its cleverest game,

[1] *Discours Parlementaires de M. Thiers*, vol. xv., p. 636.

had said, on the 23rd January, 1873, "The Government must be constituted. If we do not constitute it, our mandate comes to an end: we must hand it back to the nation. You are afraid to do so! *and so am I.* . . ."

Those tactics of the Left Centre had not alienated from it the members of the other Lefts, who approved its fidelity to the Republican formula. The more politic Republicans felt encouraged by the vote which had brought down the Broglie Cabinet, and by the reciprocal animosity of the two Rights. Gambetta and his friends, while still hesitating, were wondering whether "something could not be done" with this Assembly.

All the parties, who, only yesterday, were clamouring for rapid decisions and immediate sanctions, now met in a common desire for postponement and temporisation.

In spite of M. Thiers, who was rendered suspect by his personal grievances, the Lefts allowed the question of dissolution to rest. Gambetta seized the opportunity afforded by d'Alton Shée's obsequies to make a first appeal to the "rallied." "The ancient aristocracy belongs to France, and can still serve her. . . ." In the same speech, we find the formula, "Athenian Republic." At Auxerre, on the 1st June, he placed himself and his party immediately behind the Left Centre, which he called "the front rank."

The Bonapartists also believed that Time was working for them; they thought they could detect in the Parliament, if not in the country, the first symptoms of that uncertainty and anarchy by which the reconstitution of the old Imperial hierarchy might allow them to profit.

The Legitimists had nothing to gain and nothing to lose; they awaited orders from Frohsdorf.

As to the moderate Rights, the Right, the Changarnier group, the Right Centre, they hoped by temporising to regain an influence which was beginning to fail

them. They thought that the Left Centre was not indifferent to the bait of "Conservative principles," and dreamt of retarding the fatal moment by a new Parliamentary combination, "the Union of the Centres."

But they were to be caught in their own meshes. Convinced that their doctrines were infallible and their assistance indispensable, they were to lose, by conceding step after step, the little ground that was left them. They ended by adhering to a system which they hated, without having stipulated for or obtained the price of their adhesion.

In this period of French History, the drama consists in the slow suicide of the "ruling classes," under the latent or direct pressure of Universal Suffrage.

In the meanwhile, France needed a Government.

M. de Goulard.

M. de Goulard was the man of the day; to him the Marshal entrusted, on Sunday the 17th May, the task of forming a Cabinet.

M. de Goulard personified the "Union of the Centres." He had been a Minister under M. Thiers, but, having left him on the eve of the crisis of the 21st May, he had thus contributed towards the fall of the illustrious President. He had nevertheless remained his friend—everybody's friend, a kindly, prudent man. As he was suffering from heart disease, his family saw him with some alarm resume the burden of affairs. "But," says M. de Meaux, somewhat maliciously, "the doctors declared that he had more chances of life in political work than apart from it."

"It is very grave, very grave," said M. de Goulard, deploring the fall of the Duc de Broglie. "It is to be hoped that some of the Deputies of the Extreme Right will return to more conciliating sentiments, and that, on the other hand, some members of the Left Centre can be

brought back; it is very grave, very grave." Such was the man and his programme: to pacify the violent, to encourage the hesitating, to round off angles and to turn corners; he went from one to the other, trying to hold the one without letting the other go.

But men were coldly disposed. Disappointment, embarrassment, vexation at the vote of the 16th May were in the air, and several days were spent in vain efforts. At last, on Thursday the 21st, M. de Goulard succeeded in persuading, first the Duc Decazes, then the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier, both intimate confidants of the Comte de Paris. He consulted M. Dufaure; it might be asked, "Why not M. Thiers?"

The groups of the Right met and approved; this would be a "great Cabinet," with the third duke, Duc Pasquier, in the front of the stage.

In the afternoon of the 21st, an agreement had been arrived at; lists were published, including several members of the Left Centre: M. Cézanne, M. Waddington. . . . In the evening everything was at an end. Why this change? Had the Right been afraid of the path into which it was being led? Was it due to that Bonapartist hostility which so often shackled the career of the Duc Pasquier? Was some occult pressure being brought to bear upon the Marshal?

General de Cissey.

The latter took an abrupt, soldier-like course. On the 22nd May, he drew up an entirely new list: M. de Goulard was left out, M. d'Audiffret-Pasquier left out, the members of the Left Centre eliminated. At the head of the new Cabinet was a soldier, General de Cissey, with the War portfolio; M. de Fourtou was given the Interior, M. Magne, Finance; the Duc Decazes, Foreign Affairs. M. Tailhand was to undertake Justice; M. de Cumont, Public Instruction and Worship; Admiral Montaignac, Marine; M. Grivart, Agriculture, and M.

Caillaux, Public Works. It was a business Cabinet, a "small" Cabinet.

M. de Fourtou being Minister of the Interior, an impression prevailed that the evolution was taking place towards the Left, towards the *Blues*. It may have been so, but it was a Bonapartist, not a Republican shade of blue.

Bonapartist Success.

Now, at the very moment when the Ministry was being constituted, Bonapartism was triumphant. In the Nièvre, Baron Philippe de Bourgoing, formerly an Equerry of the Emperor, who, in his election address had called upon the "appeal to the people," was elected on the 4th May, by 37,568 votes, against 32,119 given to M. Gudin, a Republican, and 4,575 to M. Pazzis, a Legitimist. The Nièvre had recently elected M. Turigny, a Republican, by 39,872 votes, against 28,253. It was thought that this sudden "turn over" revealed the intervention of the ex-mayors of the Empire, whom the Duc de Broglie had reinstated. This unexpected step in the quadrille of balanced parties caused a deep sensation.

Here was the Bonapartist peril once again, the only nightmare which could disturb the slumber of the Rights.

The twenty years of Imperial repression were too recent to be forgotten. The mass of the people was felt to be uncertain; the Marshal himself, the Cabinet, the Army, if seen from a certain angle, seemed doubtful. All that provisional system would offer no resistance to force; any system of institutions would be better: the Republic was a nameless something which compromised nothing.

But how vague and difficult all this was! No help was to be expected from the Cabinet; it only just breathed, and merely vegetated noiselessly. Words being useless or dangerous, it had published no declara-

tion, no programme; all initiative was left to the Assembly.

The first sitting after the Duc de Broglie's downfall took place on the 30th May, when the excellent M. Raudot reappeared with his rough speech and uncouth humour. "Let us decide upon our course," he cried; "let the minutes of this sitting bear witness to our will to be and to act. If not, nothing remains but dissolution." And his voice was heard.

Questions of Priority.

The question was again the order in which the three Bills were to be taken, a question of the greatest Parliamentary importance. At that time, to secure priority was equal to a State victory, for Parliamentary delays were such that "What shall we begin with?" meant, in other words, "What shall we leave out?"

M. Raudot proposed the following order of proceedings: (1) Municipal Electoral Bill; (2) Parliamentary Electoral Bill; (3) Municipal Organisation Bill.[1] This, it will be remembered, was the very point discussed on the eve of the Duc de Broglie's fall. But the aspect had altogether changed, and that which divided the Centres then was to unite them now.

M. Bérenger dwelt upon this, drawing attention to the fact that, on the 16th May, the vote bore upon the question of confidence and not upon the subject matter. He urged the Assembly to deal at once with the Parliamentary Electoral Bill, in a word, with the constitutional law. "Since you have been powerless to procure a Monarchy, since we have failed to secure the Republic, let us at least make a durable Constitution

[1] According to the standing orders of the National Assembly, each Bill for which urgency had not been declared, was submitted to three discussions; unless urgency were declared, nine discussions would probably follow upon M. Raudot's motion.

with the illustrious Head of the State whom you yourselves appointed."

So here was the Left Centre interposing between the Rights and the person of the Marshal. The Extreme Right attempted to continue the game of see-saw which had given it the control of events on the day of M. de Broglie's fall. M. Lucien Brun brought forward a captious motion intended to sub-divide division itself. Did he hope that, between an immediate Republic and an unconditional Monarchy, the moderate Rights would recant and pronounce for the restoration of the dynasty? If so, he was mistaken; no reconciliation took place between the monarchical parties.

After a confused debate, it was decided to open, in the first place, the discussion on the Municipal Electoral Bill, then that of the Municipal Organisation Bill, and finally that of the Parliamentary Electoral Bill. The bitter cup of the constitutional law was put away as far as possible. Short delays, vain postponements. Those discussions, parallel in appearance, became mixed in reality; the death-throes of the Right were about to begin.

Municipal Electoral Bill.

The debate opened upon the Municipal Electoral Bill. The first motion was carried in two hours, on the 1st June, without any intervention from the Cabinet. At the end of the sitting, and without opposition, the Municipal Organisation Bill was adopted at the first reading.

The Municipal Electorate! Why, it meant the whole electoral question! How can a citizen be viewed differently when pronouncing upon local affairs or upon general politics? Every one felt that the one decision carried the other with it, that Universal Suffrage—that is, the basis of the whole Constitution—was in question. Classes or masses, equality or privilege, a choice had to be made. Municipal life contains the embryo of national

life; the municipal ballot is the precursor, the prototype of the parliamentary ballot.

Doctrines and interests were now in conflict.

The Right Centre, hesitating and divided, but still master of the situation, weighed the redoubtable dilemma. It would be interesting to follow the intimate workings of each of those parliamentary souls, through which the future was to be born.

During this sitting (1st June), one of the youngest Deputies, but one whose exalted spirit and Liberal tendencies had secured for him the confidence of the Comte de Paris, the Vicomte Othenin d'Haussonville, placed his finger on the very spot, and, at the same time, broke the last connecting link with the Extreme Right. He said, when the discussion on the Municipal Electoral Bill began: "There is but one suffrage, Universal Suffrage. . . . Those who would lay hands upon it are sitting on the furthest benches of the Extreme Right . . . there are some among you who will not follow them in that course. . . ." The Extreme Right showed some astonishment, but the speaker persisted. He had just broken with the Bonapartists by recalling "the mutilation suffered by our unhappy country"; he now broke with the Legitimists by rejecting "that solution by which Monarchy is considered as a religious dogma of which the King would be the infallible pontiff. . . ." Now came the painful moment: "We were disposed, following the generous example given to us on the 5th of August,[1] to seek the necessary guarantees in a Constitutional and Parliamentary Monarchy . . . Such a monarchy has been denied us." A growing agitation; "No, no!" from the Extreme Right.—M. de Franclieu rose: "You yourselves, Parliamentary Royalists, are answerable before man and

[1] Date of the Comte de Paris' visit to Frohsdorf.

before God." "M. de Franclieu's interruption," calmly said M. d'Haussonville, "proves that he and I do not understand Monarchy in the same way." And he concluded by throwing in his lot with the partisans of the Septennate.

This was a consequence of the failure of the Goulard combination, coming after the fall of the Broglie Cabinet. The Orleanists, in their turn, were becoming angry. M. de Vinols said, somewhat naïvely, to M. Depeyre, "Is the 'fusion' a mere comedy, then?" whilst the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier replied to the same M. de Vinols, who was complaining of the Vicomte d'Haussonville's language, "We must put an end to this."

The advances of the Liberal Right Centre were immediately noted by M. Lacaze, of the Left Centre: "If I am not very much mistaken," said he, "there are here many hearts which are brimming over with a desire for conciliation." A movement of approbation answered this appeal from a generous soul.

Such was the mental attitude of the Assembly as the debate on the Municipal Electoral Bill and on the Parliamentary Electoral Bill, brought it to the question of the Universal Suffrage, thus laying the first stone of the new *régime*. The Centres grew nearer to each other. . . . Was it to take each other by the hand, or by the throat?

The discussion of the first reading of the Parliamentary Electoral Bill began on the 2nd June. It was evident that there was really but one question, and, as M. d'Haussonville put it, "one Suffrage."

Universal Suffrage.

Since it had been established, in 1848, Universal Suffrage had been in force in France, but it had never been discussed. The middle classes had submitted to it, but they did not really agree to it and did not understand it. The blows, by which the sledge-hammer of Imperial *plébiscites* had stunned the

fragile opposition of *bourgeois* Liberalism, had seemed brutal, unrestrained and unreasonable. The "incapacity of the masses," the "tyranny of numbers" were phrases constantly heard in clubs and drawing-rooms. The great desire was to overthrow the monster; but how was it to be reached? This secret preoccupation lay at the bottom of the debate (2nd to 4th June). The report of the Committee of Thirty, presented by its President, M. Batbie, attempted to circumscribe the evils which could not be cured. Since it could not be suppressed, Universal Suffrage was to be "cleansed."

Three remedies were ingeniously combined in the new formula: the electors' age was raised to twenty-five years, their residence was submitted to very strict rules, and, further, the conditions for eligibility were regulated no less strictly. It was intended to reduce in this way, by about one-third, the number of citizens exercising the franchise, and to confine within a narrow circle the chances and possibilities of elections.

However, the principle of Universal Suffrage itself had been admitted by the Committee. And this constituted for its partisans such a decided advantage that, from the very first, the Right showed the uneasiness of anticipated defeat, whilst the Left obviously rejoiced at a coming victory.

The veterans opened the attack. Old M. Ledru-Rollin's thundering speech fell rather flat, but another survivor of 1848, M. Louis Blanc, placed the debate on its proper ground. In cold, measured tones, he delivered a clear, logical opinion, warming up as the disciple of Jean-Jacques developed the philosophical conception of the system and pointed to Social order following upon unanimity of assent. "People speak of the representation of interests," he said. "Who is not interested in the good administration of Society? All, poor and rich

alike, contribute to bear public burdens . . . there is a solidarity of interests." Again: "Universal Suffrage is the instrument of order *par excellence*. Through it, the laws are made by all, and all are bound to respect them." And here came the famous answer, so deeply just in its simplicity. "Who is qualified," asked the speaker, "to grant the suffrage to one and to refuse it to another?" "We are," shouted an imprudent voice from the Right. "Show your credentials," replied Louis Blanc. Born of Universal Suffrage, the Assembly had no right to mutilate it. Louis Blanc felt so sure of his ground that he ended his speech by saying, "And now, vote the destruction of Universal Suffrage if you dare!"

Gambetta and M. Batbie.

M. Batbie, Chairman of the Committee, the Vicomte de Meaux, the Marquis de Castellane, spoke in the name of the Right and invoked extenuating circumstances. M. Dufaure advocated the system of M. Thiers, which kept the age of suffrage at twenty-one, whilst imposing conditions of residence which were even stricter than those of the Committee. Gambetta crowned the debate by one of his most felicitous improvisations: "He is in a fine humour, brimming over with vitality, radiant with strength, with joy, with victory. Full of confidence in himself, he sallies forth in his pride, laughing, adventurous, triumphant before the world. He is familiar, good-natured, comrade-like. He seizes the ponderous lawyer and plays with him like a cat with a ball, overwhelms him with the funniest compliments, laughs at him, forces him to laugh too, handles him, caresses him, rolls him over and finishes him. Then, suddenly changing his tactics, he becomes logical, closes in upon his adversary and overpowers him with flawless argumentation."[1]

He made the Right tremble by threatening it with "a

[1] Camille Pelletan, *Le Théâtre de Versailles*, p. 158.

leap in the dark" if two or three million electors were suppressed. Then, reassuringly, he undertook to safeguard the Assembly. M. Batbie had rather unadvisedly pronounced the word Dissolution. And it was Gambetta (Gambetta of the Dissolutionist Campaign!) who conjured this spectre, urging his colleagues to pursue their duty unfailingly, to the very end. He it was who flattered the unavowed hopes of a House which refused to die. "You have not yet laid hands upon Universal Suffrage, and I am convinced that you will not do so."

The Right itself owned that the Left had carried off the palm in that oratorical joust. "It soon became evident," writes Baron de Vinols,[1] "that the Right, by the fall of the Duc de Broglie, had deprived itself of its only powerful oratorical defence, for, M. de Broglie excepted, there was not a single salient personality, a single strong or eloquent speaker on the Right side of the House; the Left included a great many."

The second reading of the Bill was voted by 378 against 301.[2]

This was a step in advance. The Liberal party was beginning to be conscious of its common forces and aspirations. From the Right and from the Left, moderate elements united to face Bonapartism and the Extreme Right.

[1] Baron de Vinols, *loc. cit.*, p. 199.

[2] In fact, the second reading of this Bill—which became the Law of the 30th November, 1875—was only to take place on the 8th November, 1875. After the fundamental modifications introduced by the Assembly into the Municipal Electoral Bill, the question arose as to whether it were expedient to maintain two Registers (Parliamentary and Municipal) or whether it were better to return to the system of one Register only, which obtained before 1870. The dual system had been established by the Provisional Act of April 1871.

The Law of April 1884 re-established one Register. There was not a great difference between the two lists; the registers drawn up to March 1884 gave a total of 10,062,425 Municipal electors and 10,204,228 Parliamentary electors, *i.e.* 141,803 electors enjoying the parliamentary vote only. See L. Morgand, *la Loi Municipale*, vol. i., p. 121.

That momentary *rapprochement* at least produced an effect of molecular attraction on the Right Centre. Now, this group was the axis of the Assembly, and its dislocation was bound to carry with it the movement which was to determine the future.

Schism in the Right Centre.

Its members met under the presidency of the Duc Pasquier. On the 2nd June, a long declaration was voted by 53 members out of 160. Where was the boldness, where the originality of those 53, who henceforth called themselves the "dissidents"? "The Right Centre," said the declaration, "has decided to *maintain the title* given by existing laws to the Head of the Executive, and to reject any proposition which might tend to prevent or to weaken the vote of Constitutional laws." This was indeed nobly courageous! And yet, this formula "to maintain" was to become the embryo of a Constitution. The maintenance of the Marshal's title meant a semi-acceptance of the Republic—without, however, putting it into words.

For many long months, all the political art of the men of the Right Centre consisted in eloquent reticence and scientific silence such as this. They progressed through the fire, careful of every word, every gesture. "Personal Septennate," "impersonal Septennate," "existing *régime*," "institutions adopted by the country," such terminology encumbered henceforth official and Parliamentary language. Politicians would and would not, did and did not, trembling and daring at the same time. Those slow and timid tactics practically determined the fate of the country by recognising *constitutionally* the title which Marshal MacMahon had borne since his accession. The history of those times is difficult to relate, mean and small in its details, but passionately interesting nevertheless, if looked at in the broad and powerful light of its consequences.

The Left Centre answered the advances of the Right Centre: a resolution passed by the group on the 6th June urged the twin group to one more effort. The famous "union," they said, can only take place on "the day when Marshal MacMahon becomes, not the President of a seven-years Republic, but the seven-years President of a Republic."

As the Right Centre advanced, the Left drew back—but only slightly, without breaking the ranks; 116 Deputies, including M. Casimir-Perier, signed this ultimatum. After that common effort, scruples, temporisations, and digressions prevailed again.

It was noticed that the Nuncio Meglia (successor to Monsignor Chigi), in the address to Marshal MacMahon which accompanied his credentials—a speech in which every word is weighed in the timorous scales of the protocol—did not pronounce the word Republic. Diplomatic depths! party subtleties! The Government which ruled the country, and which represented it abroad, had no name in any language!

II

The Girerd Incident.

Amid so much obscurity, a general nervousness prevailed; private and public interests remained in suspense. The idea of a return of Bonapartism, with its rough proceedings and redoubtable designs, seemed terrifying. The fear of it weighed on men's minds and hovered over the debates, already so important in themselves.

At the end of the sitting of the 9th June, M. Cyprien Girerd, Republican member for the Nièvre, interrupted the discussion on the Municipal Bill in order to ask a twofold question of the Ministers of Justice and of the Interior. A document had been found in a railway

carriage, which the speaker proceeded to read aloud. "Urge all your friends, especially those who are in municipal or administrative official positions, to use every endeavour to obtain for us the assistance of retired officers or others residing in the Nièvre;" a list of retired officers followed, "procured by the Ministry of Finance." The document was dated on the 2nd May and signed "The Central Committee of the Appeal to the People." What half-pay intrigue was this? Did an occult Government exist? with accomplices in the Cabinet, since its recruiting list was provided by the Ministry of Finance.

The Cabinet, taken unawares, denied everything and promised that proceedings should be taken. M. Rouher, obviously aimed at, held firm: "I declare on my honour, that, to my knowledge, the Committee does not exist."

Gambetta attacked the Ministers for War and of Finance, asking for an inquiry. M. Rouher stood up, accusing Gambetta of having himself evaded inquiries. A violent scene ensued; Gambetta was ever ready for a war of words: "If any one here is absolutely without any claim or title to call the Revolution of the 4th September to account, it certainly is every one of those wretches who have ruined France." This phrase produced a tumult, and the President intervened, demanding its withdrawal. But Gambetta continued: "Gentlemen, it is true that the expression I have used is more than an insult; it is a stain, and I maintain it." M. Rouher answered amid the noise. Silence was obtained gradually, but it was but an outward calm.

The next day, 10th June, Gambetta was apostrophised at the St. Lazare station by a group of Bonapartists, as he was going to take the train for Versailles.

On the 11th, at one o'clock, a crowd awaited his departure; some disorder took place, and two Deputies

from the Extreme Left, MM. de Mahy and Lefèvre, were arrested, only to be immediately set free. In the evening, as the Deputies' train came in, Gambetta, who was accompanied by M. Ordinaire, was struck in the face by the Comte de Sainte-Croix, a son of a former Prefect of the Empire, and a man of ill-balanced mind. M. de Sainte-Croix was brought before a police court the next day, and condemned to six months' imprisonment and a 200f. fine.

The police had dealt somewhat roughly with the Deputies of the Left; among its members, some faces had seemed strangely reminiscent of the *Coup d'État.*

On the 11th June, M. Baze, a *quæstor*, questioned the Government on the St. Lazare incidents. M. de Fourtou's answer was an ambiguous one; he welcomed an inquiry, but added that two things were equally intolerable; one was certainly abuse of power on the part of the police; the other was "rebellion against those brave men who are entrusted with the care of public peace, and who do their duty loyally."

Surprise was general on the Left, and even reached the Liberal Centre. A Goulard interpellation was spoken of. But the latter feared to compromise himself and drew back at the last moment. M. Paul Bethmont, of the Left, was the interpellator, on the 12th.

M. de Fourtou stood firm before the storm; and would not be forced to pronounce the word Republic. The order of the day pure and simple was carried by 370 votes against 318. To conclude, the Ministry impartially suspended M. de Cassagnac's paper, the *Pays*, and the Republican *XIXème. Siècle* and *Rappel.*

The matter had been exciting, too exciting for poor M. de Goulard, who had been caught by the advances of the Left, to the point of being "almost compromised,"

and who now could not bear the reproaches of his friends on the Right. "He suffered cruelly for his weakness," unmercifully writes one of them:[1] "the disease of the heart from which he suffered developed rapidly; twenty-four hours later, he was seriously ill; on the 3rd July he died." A bad omen for the Union of the Centres!

The anxiety of a fraction of the Rights led the Lefts to take a favourable view of the situation, and to come to a decision which, while transforming their whole tactics, indicated their confidence in the future. Through the influence of Gambetta, the group of the Republican Lefts and the majority of the United Lefts declared, on the 13th June, that they no longer contested the constituent power of the Assembly, and that they would adhere to the Bill for Republican institutions which was shortly to be brought out by the Left Centre.

This was a masterly turn of the helm. The day of Opportunism had come, its triumph was at hand. The thirty years which followed were the result of that fateful 13th June.

The resolution was not carried without lively opposition from the Extreme Left, which had remained faithful to the Dissolution campaign. Its members saw no advantage in the Republic being proclaimed, since the Republic had already been, for four years, the legal Government of the country. They affirmed that it was paying too dear for the benefit of that one word to allow the Assembly—and particularly the united Centres—to organise the Republic as it liked. They drew attention to the mistake that was being made in leaving to the Bonapartist party the privilege of having had a direct mandate from the people. They distrusted a Republic created by Monarchists

Opportunist Assent.

[1] Baron de Vinols, p. 205.

against Republicans, and declared that, in order to remain faithful to the principles and interests of the country, it was necessary to dissolve the Assembly, and to elect a constituting body.

This opinion was supported by Louis Blanc, Peyrat, Ledru-Rollin, and had the tacit acquiescence of Jules Grévy. But the Left, properly so-called, conducted by Gambetta, inclined towards more prudent tactics. They foresaw that, in case of a general election, all Conservatives would unite to face the Lefts; fearing, as they did, the intolerance which had already more than once ruined the cause of the Republic, they lent themselves to combinations of groups and to a policy of compromise.

Every one cried aloud for action; as a matter of fact, the two opposing forces, being equal, annulled each other and remained motionless.

The question of the moment, on which everything depended, was still Universal Suffrage and the two Electoral Bills. The second discussion on the Municipal Electorate had begun on the 8th June. MM. Tallon, Jouin, Jules Ferry, René Brice made long speeches: "Let us act," cried M. Raudot, "there is a deal too much talking!" And he spoke in favour of decentralisation; in his opinion, the Nancy programme was being forgotten!

The debate continued on the 9th. In drawing up the electoral registers, what part was to be left to the central authority, to the local authority, to the electors themselves? The members of the Right, embarrassed partisans of decentralisation, supported the intervention of the central power; with their contradictions, they were playing the game of their antagonists. M. Jules Ferry took part in the debate with an ardour, tenacity, and competency which were noticed: "We must have no

official electors and no official candidates. . . . Better an authority which will oppress the electors than an authority which can choose them. . . ."

One of the knotty points had been reached: the electoral age. Was a French citizen to be entitled to vote as soon as he reached his civil majority, at twenty-one, or was he to wait until he was twenty-five? Was it well to decide on such a grave question *à propos* of the Municipal Electorate? A deputy of the Left whose authority was rapidly growing, M. Goblet, remarked that, under a *régime* of National Sovereignty, this was a fundamental point; it appertained to the Constitution to fix it. A proposal for adjournment was rejected.

An amendment by MM. Oscar de Lafayette, Jozon, Ch. Rolland and Lamy—the most moderate members of the Left—proposed, against the report of the Committee, to maintain twenty-one as the Municipal electoral age. The Committee defended its system, and was applauded by the Right. But the position of the latter was so weak, that, even on the same subject, and on the proposition of MM. Lucien Brun and de Valfons, who wished to reserve the Municipal electorate for fathers of families and for taxpayers, it offered but a poor defence. M. Lucien Brun said, in support of his amendment: "I claim that nothing more honestly democratic, more favourable to families, more moral, has ever been proposed to an Assembly." The theory was a specious one, but, in this debate, each claim of the Rights revealed a hidden class interest, and this irremediably weakened their whole argumentation.

A member of the Left Centres, M. Bethmont, said, in support of maintaining the existing electoral age (twenty-one): "A measure delaying the right to vote until the age of twenty-five would be considered by Universal Suffrage as a mutilation and an outrage." M. O.

de Lafayette's amendment was carried by 348 votes against 337.

M. de Chabrol, "Reporter" of the Bill, himself undertook to settle M. Lucien Brun's proposition: "There must be a certain harmony between local laws and the laws of a State ruled by Universal Suffrage." This principle, when once adopted, carried everything with it. The Lucien Brun amendment was rejected by 385 votes against 254.

Therefore, every French citizen of more than twenty-one years of age and residing in a "Commune" was to enjoy the right of suffrage. No Assembly ever passed a more broadly democratic measure. It was decided on the 12th June to pass on to a third discussion.

The Casimir-Perier Motion.

It was now the turn of political institutions. The Left Centre continued its manœuvres, seizing upon the programme of the Rights, but covering it with the name of the Republic. The most moderate were now the most eager.

On the 15th of June, M. Casimir-Perier handed to the President a motion, supported by MM. Léon de Malleville, Louis La Caze, Émile Lenoël, René Brice, Achille Delorme, Robert de Massy, Léon Say and Gailly:—

The National Assembly, in order to put an end to the anxieties of the country, adopts the following resolution:—

The Committee on Constitutional Laws will take as a basis of its work on the organisation and transmission of public powers:—

1°. Clause I of the Bill introduced on the 19th May, 1873, running thus: "The Government of the French Republic is composed of two Chambers and a President who is Head of the Executive."

2°. The Law of the 20th November, 1873, by which the Presidency of the Republic has been entrusted to Marshal de MacMahon until the 20th November, 1880.

3°. The confirmation of the right of a partial or total revision of the Constitution, at times and in a manner determined by Constitutional laws.

M. Casimir-Perier pleaded urgency.

This personal intervention was an event. The son of the most energetic minister of the July monarchy, who had when in power impersonated authority and vigour, whom his adversaries called a Reactionary! Casimir-Perier! The name brought with it all the traditions of a great past. And the heir of that name was flinging those traditions into the Republican side of the scale.

What long hesitations, what difficult situations, what conscientious perplexities could have given birth to such a decision?

Auguste Casimir Victor Laurent Perier, born in Paris in 1811, was the eldest son of Louis Philippe's celebrated minister. Having belonged to the Diplomatic Service until 1846, he was Minister Plenipotentiary at Hanover, when he was elected Deputy for Paris (1st circumscription). He therefore was a member of the Chamber which supported M. Guizot. Between a Perier and a Guizot, however, no complete agreement was possible; the young Deputy made some show of Liberalism and drew near to MM. Thiers and Odilon Barrot. Nevertheless, he remained an Orleanist under the second Republic and under the second Empire, and was violently opposed by the Imperial administration in the Department of the Aude, where he was a candidate on several occasions.

The advent of M. Thiers, in 1871, brought its reward to a faithful friendship. M. Thiers, when composing his first Cabinet, gave him the portfolio of the Interior. M. Casimir-Perier did not keep it long. Among the various vicissitudes which alternately gave him power or took it from him, he remained an avowed partisan of the illustrious President. However, he had not broken the bonds which attached him personally to the Orleans family; he sometimes entertained the Comte de Paris in his château at Pont-sur-Seine.

How were such early associations and family ties to be reconciled with the evolution brought about by the example and influence of M. Thiers? What share should be given, in this new orientation, to inward pressure, occult thoughts and recondite hopes? The public looks for self-interest and ambition in these slow modifications of opinion; good M. de Vinols seriously declares that Casimir-Perier wished to be again a minister, "in order to eat peaches at 75 cents each for his breakfast!" [1]

If parties will not take altered opinions into account, let them at least admit the force of situations. In such critical moments, the greatest difficulties come from personal environment. A woman's smile, a shrug of the shoulders seen in a mirror, will sometimes arrest a decisive word on a man's lips. "Society" placed obstacles before the Republic, as it ever will do before new men or new ideas.

M. Casimir-Perier, a brother-in-law of the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier, was at the very meeting-point of all parties and of all social circles, within reach of the least movement of public or parliamentary opinion. Still youthful looking, although already sixty-four years of age, plump and curly haired, he looked "rather like an amiable Englishman." Intelligent and hard-working, his kindly nature led him to enjoy life without hurting any one's feelings, and to smile at events with a good grace. He had the strong digestion and the florid complexion of an optimist. It is probable that this steady, well-balanced nature, added to that strange sense of the future which so often distinguishes great families, led M. Casimir-Perier, an Orleanist of yesterday, to become one of the founders of the Republic.

Never was he more eloquent. He read from the

[1] Baron de Vinols, p. 206.

tribune an exposition of the motives of the resolution. "Put an end to this provisional state of things which is killing us. . . . The Committee of Thirty has done nothing for six months; its work lacks a basis that you alone can give. Choose between a Republic or a Monarchy! With the revision clause, the National Sovereignty remains intact." Revision was in effect a great concession granted to Monarchists. The Extreme Left, highly opposed to the Casimir-Perier motion, shouted that this was creating a sham Republic in which was hidden the trap of a possible Restoration.

A member of the Right, M. Lambert de Sainte-Croix, raised a counter-proposition, recognising the Republic for seven years and adjourning to the end of that time the decision to be taken between the two forms of government. Against an immediate Republic, an adjourned Republic: to this were the Monarchists reduced!

M. Laboulaye supported the Casimir-Perier motion: "The events of the last few days must have enlightened you: we must constitute a Government. Last year, four alternatives were present. Now we can only do one of three things: either maintain provisional conditions, accept the Empire, or constitute the Republic." And he concluded with the argument which, from the first, weighed most strongly in favour of the Republic, the argument of fact. "You have had the Republic, practically, for three years. . . . What do you risk in adopting it?"

M. Raoul Duval urged an appeal to the country.

No one rose to demand the restoration of the Bourbons. In this monarchical Assembly, the Monarchists held their peace. As to the Government, it expressed no opinion.

A vote was taken, and the result proclaimed amidst "deep silence." Urgency for the Casimir-Perier resolution was carried by 345 votes against 341.

The Lefts and the Right Centre had voted in favour of it. Men like the Duc Decazes, Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier, Comte d'Harcourt, Vicomte d'Haussonville, had abstained. Members of the Extreme Left, who continued to deny the constituent powers of the Assembly, MM. Louis Blanc, Edgard Quinet, etc., had voted against urgency. They accused the Casimir-Perier motion of casting a doubt over the existing form of government by submitting it to a vote. This first Republican victory was therefore a victory of the Centres.

It was then only that a member of the Assembly, the Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Bisaccia, Ambassador of the French Republic in London, moved this resolution: "The Government of France is a Monarchy. The throne belongs to the Head of the House of France." After a somewhat doubtful sitting and standing vote, this proposition was referred, not to the Committee on Constitutional Laws, but only to a Preliminary Committee, which was equivalent to an unconditional rejection.

Nothing remained now but to proclaim the Republic.

The Wallon Proposition.

On the 16th June, M. Wallon introduced the following Bill on the organisation of the President's powers and on the mode of revision of the Constitutional laws:

CLAUSE I.—The President of the Republic is elected, by a majority of votes, by a National Assembly composed of the Senate and of the Chamber of Deputies.

He is elected for seven years. He may be re-elected.

CLAUSE II.—The title and powers of President of the Republic, conferred on Marshal MacMahon by the Law of the 20th Nov., 1873, shall be continued to him without another form of election until the end of seven years from the passing of the present law, under the following conditions:—

CLAUSE III.—The rights and duties of the President of the Republic are settled by Clauses 44, 49 to 57, and 60 to 64 of the 1848 Constitution.

He may also, with the sanction of the Senate, dissolve the Chamber of Deputies before the expiration of its mandate.

In that case, new elections shall take place within three months.

CLAUSE IV.—In case of a vacancy through death or any other cause, the two Houses together will proceed to the election of a new President within one month.

During the interval, the Vice-President of the Cabinet will assume the Executive power.

CLAUSE V.—The Constitutional laws may be revised at the request either of the President of the Republic or of one of the two Houses.

This revision, however, may take place at the President of the Republic's request only during the term of authority conferred upon Marshal Mac-Mahon by the Law of the 20th Nov. 1873.

CLAUSE VI.—If the President of the Republic should propose a revision of the Constitution, or if it should be resolved by one of the two Houses, both Houses shall meet within seven days in one Assembly, presided over by the President of the Senate, for the purposes of debate.

If the proposition should be rejected, it cannot be moved again before the expiration of one year.

If at the end of this time it is again moved and again rejected, it cannot be introduced again before a new election of the Chamber of Deputies.

CLAUSE VII.—If the proposition be carried by the two united Houses, the two Houses, forming one National Assembly, shall proceed to the revision of the Constitution.

CLAUSE VIII.—The President of the Republic is bound to promulgate and to enforce the execution of the new Constitutional Laws within the time fixed by the National Assembly.

This proposition was referred without discussion to the Committee on Constitutional Laws. Things were moving on apace. The Rights and the Cabinet held a conference. The recess was approaching. Was it possible to hold out until then?

Municipal Organisation.

The Municipal Electoral Laws were not quite completed. Whilst the Committee of Thirty took up the propositions which had been referred to it, the Assembly resumed its task.

Sittings from the 17th to the 22nd June were given up to the second discussion of the Municipal Organisation Bill. The principal difficulties now bore upon the co-option of the heaviest taxpayers, and on the right of electing Mayors. The partisans of the co-option of the heaviest taxpayers invoked the good administration of local finance. M. Jules Ferry, who led the debate on behalf of the Left, answered: "To divide Municipal

Councils in this way would be to encourage hostility between classes, and so foment a civil war in the representation of the 'Communes';" and he added, revealing the motive which lay at the bottom of these efforts: "As soon as the question of Universal Suffrage is touched upon, we feel that there is a misunderstanding between us. At the bottom of your hearts lies a very natural regret for the *régime* of privileges. You do not ask that it be re-established, but you introduce into our electoral laws a thousand little dodges intended to bring it back."

On the motion of M. Bardoux, beating the Committee by a majority of forty-three, a return to the Law of 1837 (Clause 42) was voted. This ensured the co-option of the heaviest taxpayers in numbers equal to the elected municipal councillors, but only in those "Communes" whose income was less than 100,000 francs, and if new loans or rates were contemplated.

As to giving the right of appointing Mayors to the Government, the matter provoked an intervention by M. de Fourtou in favour of M. Clapier's amendment, continuing for two years the right of appointing Mayors attributed to the Government by the Law of the 20th January, 1874.

The Assembly decided upon a third reading.[1] "The situation of the Assembly was so precarious at that time," writes a member of the Right, "that we were rejoicing at having confirmed for two years a detail of administration, whilst, all the time, Universal Suffrage remained untouched and firmer than ever."[2]

The Casimir-Perier motion was gaining ground,

[1] As a matter of fact, this third reading never took place. Before the Dissolution (15th Nov., 1875) the Assembly decided to leave to its successor the care of working out a Municipal Organisation Bill.

[2] Baron de Vinols, p. 208.

having publicly recruited a former Minister of the July Monarchy, M. de Montalivet, a personal friend of Louis Philippe. It was feared that his example might be followed. M. Léonce de Lavergne, Vice-President of the Right Centre, made no secret of his intention of voting for the Casimir-Perier motion, in case the impersonal Septennate should be rejected. M. Léonce de Lavergne's slow evolution was a characteristic one; at the opening of the National Assembly he belonged to the Colbert group, which he left for the Right Centre. In 1875, he voted with the Left Centre.

On the 28th June, after six days' discussion, the Committee of Thirty rejected the Casimir-Perier proposal by eighteen votes against six, and appointed a Sub-Committee of three to formulate, in a few clauses, the essential points of an Organisation Bill. This Sub-Committee was composed of MM. Daru, de Ventavon, and de Lacombe.

In a public sitting, on the 30th June, the third discussion of the Municipal Electoral Bill began; it continued until the 7th July. M. Jouin, of the Left Centre, uttered a lively and very remarkable speech in favour of Universal Suffrage without classifications or categories. He appealed to the Assembly's patriotic and Christian feelings, not to let it be said that the poor were left unheard. M. de Chabrol, the Reporter, a good man if ever there was one, was stung to the quick: "In the name of our conscience," said he, "I protest against accusations which, if they were founded, would rank us with the lowest of mankind." But he was obliged to acknowledge the kind of terror which Universal Suffrage inspired in a great many members of the Assembly. Quoting a speech made by M. Bethmont in 1871, he repeated: "It must be understood that Universal Suffrage, startling in its inconsistencies, terrifying in

its results, is nevertheless attractive by its force, its greatness, and its incontestable power."

The Committee, whilst slowly yielding, clung to a last resistance. M. de Chabrol addressed a supreme appeal to his friends. "Do not alarm vested interests, Gentlemen; do not put them in the situation where they found themselves in 1851. . . . I beg you to resist this nameless Democratic weakness which tolerates everything, allows everything, represses nothing, and ends by seeking a protector. . . . at what price?"

In spite of these efforts, on the 1st July, M. O. de Lafayette's motion, maintaining twenty-one as the electoral age, was read for the second time and carried by 305 votes against 294, the ballot being secret. On the 6th, M. Raudot, Chairman of the Committee, announced, after a lively debate, that the Committee itself had reduced from three to two years the time of residence required from local electors. But with what a bad grace were those concessions made!

At last, the Bill was passed, on the 7th, by 452 votes against 228. M. Pascal Duprat openly proclaimed, on the eve of the ballot, the significance attached by the Left to the victory obtained through its patience, prudence and perseverance. "Universal Suffrage means, in our hopes, at least, the reign of Democracy; Universal Suffrage is a final and not merely a temporary farewell to all Monarchical hopes."

And the Assembly voted this democratic Bill by an enormous majority. It had now for a long time been more liberal than its own origin, its own declarations, more democratic than its own groups and committees. Whenever it found itself face to face with Universal Suffrage, it surrendered without a struggle.

III

The despairing leaders could do nothing to arrest those repeated defeats. Still, they attempted to stem the tide, Bonapartists by working on the masses and Orleanists behind the scenes. . . . What were Legitimists doing? Where was the white plume? Their silence, during the Casimir-Perier debate, had been an unresisting defeat; they could not remain under such a shadow.

In spite of difficulties, complexities and perils, the Comte de Chambord took his pen and drew out a new manifesto, issued on the 2nd July.

Speaking more diplomatically than had hitherto been his wont, the Pretender appealed to all to unite together: it seemed almost as if he were about to profess Liberalism, as if the "King" himself were carried away by the general impulse.

The Comte de Chambord's Manifesto.

"Frenchmen, France needs a King. My birth has made me your King. . . . A Christian and French Monarchy is, in its very essence, a tempered monarchy. . . . This tempered monarchy involves the existence of two Houses, one of which is appointed by the Sovereign and the other by the nation, according to the mode of Suffrage determined by the law. Where does this leave any room for an arbitrary rule? . . . The House of France is sincerely, loyally reconciled; gather together trustfully, and follow it! . . ."

Was the "King" ready for one more step? Would he go as far as Parliamentarism?—No! Here sincerity, or rather a strong conception of the traditional system, arrests the pen of the Royal writer: "I wish to find, in the representatives of the nation, vigilant auxiliaries for the study of questions submitted to their control; but I reject the formula imported from foreign parts, and

repudiated by all our national traditions, of a King who reigns but does not govern."

These were proud, noble words; but they annulled all the rest of the manifesto, and destroyed every chance of a Restoration. The "King" could not or would not reign. The universal cry was that this manifesto was the end of the monarchy.

Its death-throes were public; they exposed the wounds, both old and recent, through which the Royalist party was about to succumb. There remained a resolution of the Duc de La Rochefoucauld, moving the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty; it had been referred to a committee of inquiry. The duke, called before this committee, declared that he and his friends would not have voted for the Septennate on the 20th November 1873, if they had thought that this law might become an obstacle to the return of the monarchy.

The Duc de Broglie, now accused as M. Thiers had been accused, explained his motives before the Committee. "I have always publicly supported the 'incommutability' of the Septennate," he said. "I have no recollection of a conversation during which M. de La Rochefoucauld declared that he and his friends would vote against the Cabinet if I made any engagements for the future. I did make engagements for the future, and those gentlemen did not cease to vote for us."

From that moment, the Duc de Broglie appears as the *Deus ex machinâ*, the manufacturer of fresh difficulties, now about to be raised; the official supporter of the Septennate, he is the adversary both of Legitimism and of the Republic. It is under his authority that the Marshal and the Cabinet act, under his influence that the committee of inquiry decide not to consider M. de La Rochefoucauld's motion, and to report this decision to the Assembly.

But, at the public sitting, the question assumed another aspect.

The Septennate an obstacle to the Monarchy.

The Ministry had, on the 3rd July, suspended for a fortnight the newspaper *l'Union*, which had published the Comte de Chambord's manifesto; the motive for that measure was given in these words: "Considering that the paper *l'Union* persists in contesting in its essentials the power conferred upon Marshal MacMahon by the Act of the 20th November 1873. . . ." The Septennate clearly stood in the way of the hereditary Monarchy.

M. Lucien Brun, the acknowledged leader of the Legitimist Party in the Assembly, questioned the Minister of the Interior (4th July). "Is the publication of the Comte de Chambord's manifesto the reason why that paper is suspended?" M. de Fourtou replied: "This action has been taken on account of the tone of the paper, which has for a long time continually attacked Marshal MacMahon's rights, and also, in a certain measure, on account of the publication of the document contained in yesterday's number." The Minister's declaration aggravated the measures taken and openly defied the Extreme Right. "The powers conferred on Marshal MacMahon are, for seven years, beyond the reach of all political parties, and we will not allow any one of them to touch them."

Note how bad was the situation for the hereditary Monarchy, or at any rate for the elder branch of the Monarchy. The Government and the majority of the Right declared that the door was closed to it for seven years, whilst the Republic held the place for the same period; at the most, a clever substitution of persons might, by installing a prince of the Orleans family instead of Marshal MacMahon, transform the Septennate into a Stathouderate.

In any case, Legitimate Royalty was eliminated, unheard and without recourse, by the simple application of the Septennate mechanism which its partisans had blindly helped to set going.

M. Lucien Brun gave notice of an interpellation; the discussion was fixed for the 8th July. Great agitation reigned in the Parliamentary world. On the 8th July, M. Lucien Brun mounted the tribune and proceeded to read the Comte de Chambord's manifesto. "After the first sentences, a thrill of anger ran like an electric current through the whole of the Left. Three times, all its members rose like one man. But, each time, M. Gambetta and the leaders of the Left stood up and repressed their movement."[1] M. Lucien Brun, in the name of the Comte de Chambord, appealed to the Assembly, to the Nation, to History. What a situation; what a cause for Berryer to plead! But Berryer was dead.

M. Lucien Brun brought the debate back to the subject of the Act of the 20th November, so blindly voted by himself and his friends. The Extreme Right had been deceived. He allowed it to be understood, but did not dare to pronounce the word. An interruption from M. Cézanne thrust the cruel reality home: "You were caught in your own nets, that is all!"

It was a painful moment for the majority, when, remembering the road it had covered within the last three years, it could hear these words from one of its leaders: "Did we vote in this sense that it was possible to continue a provisional arrangement or to constitute a definite Government, but that the only Government to be excluded from the Assembly's deliberations was to be a definite Monarchy? Did we really vote that?" And more poignant still was the moment when the speaker,

[1] Baron de Vinols, p. 212.

uplifted by the greatness of the subject, appealed to the future and to posterity, uttering before the Assembly the true cry of heredity, "Gentlemen, have pity upon your children!"

M. de Fourtou, Minister of the Interior, was neither a Royalist, a Traditionalist, nor a Sentimentalist. He was a man of the present, and he attended to whatever seemed most pressing. He was well aware of the strength which the Cabinet owed to its very weakness: a touch would bring it down, and its fall, coming so soon after that of the Broglie Ministry would dangerously expose the Marshal; no one dared risk it.

So the Minister might be bold with impunity. The Ribérac barrister, energetic, self-seeking and brutal, undertook to nail down the defunct Monarchy in its coffin. He hammered away, and, in his stentorian voice, shouted the last prayers over poor M. Lucien Brun's bereavement.

He spoke solely of the Law of the 20th November, which had given to Marshal MacMahon the powers which he held for a length of time, which could now no longer be modified . . . "Not even by God?" exclaimed M. Dahirel. "By voting it, you have willed that a period of calm and reflection should precede the definite settlement of the destinies of our country, that France should have a time of social tranquillity, sheltered from party competition. . . . You have placed the Government above parties. . . . It is inadmissible that its rights should be attacked day after day, its authority ignored, its prestige weakened. . . . Such attempts must be repressed, and that is why we cannot tolerate the polemical tone of the *Union*, or the publication of a manifesto, the author of which is entitled to the greatest respect, but not to an exemption from the general law, the law which you have voted. . . . Remember the Act

of the 20th November!" concluded M. de Fourtou. "The measures we have taken are, in reality, nothing but support of your work, nothing but that principle which is vital to all Governments, the principle of legitimate self-defence. . . ."

These words despoiled the Comte de Chambord of that "royal prestige" which had hitherto been tacitly respected; they made of him merely a Pretender, an outlaw, almost a rebel. The barrier which rose before him, however fragile, was an impassable one. And it was the Government of Marshal MacMahon who, through the invincible logic of facts, built this barrier in his face.

Mr. Washburne, Minister of the United States in Paris, wrote, in the account of this sitting which he sent to his Government: "It was one of the most exciting, most weighty debates that ever took place in this Assembly! . . . the play of *Hamlet* without Hamlet. . . ."

Each party affirmed its opinion: M. Ernoul, one of the originators of the Septennate, in a vehement and somewhat vindictive speech declared that, in his opinion, no one had, on the 20th November 1873, intended to preclude the proposal of this or that form of Government when the Constitutional Laws came to be discussed.

Six motions lay before the Assembly. First of all, the vote was taken on M. Lucien Brun's; it was rejected by 372 votes against 79. Seventy-nine votes! that was all that remained in the Assembly for the Legitimate Monarchy.

The majority of the Right Centre, thinking only of saving the Cabinet, pronounced for M. Paris' motion: "The National Assembly, resolved energetically to support the powers conferred for seven years on Marshal MacMahon, President of the Republic, by the Act of the

20th November, 1873, and reserving the examination of questions submitted to the Committee on Constitutional Laws, passes on to the order of the day."

The Cabinet beaten. General de Cissey declared that the Government agreed with this motion. But the Cabinet now found itself face to face with the coalition which had overthrown the Duc de Broglie: by 368 votes against 330, the Paris motion was rejected.

The Cabinet was beaten. In order to save it, 339 votes against 315 and 44 non-voters granted it an "order of the day" pure and simple.

Nevertheless, the Ministers handed their resignation to Marshal MacMahon. The crisis had come. The great cause, as it fell, made many victims.

Again the Marshal intervened in person. Obviously guided by the Duc de Broglie, who scarcely troubled to hide the leading-rein, he once more held events in suspense. He refused to accept the resignation of the Ministers, and, on the 9th July, addressed a Message to the Assembly.

The Lefts resented this repeated interference. Before the sitting, the Left Centre decided to demand a vote on the Casimer-Perier motion, and, in case of failure, to agree to dissolve.

Presidential Message. The sitting of the 9th July opened amid great excitement; General de Cissey, Vice-President of the Council, read the Message: "The powers which you have vested in me have a fixed duration. Your confidence has made them irrevocable; by conferring them on me, you have, of your own accord, put a curb on your Sovereignty. . . . Now, no more imperious duty lies before the Assembly than that which consists in securing for the country, by regular institutions, calm, security, and pacification. I am asking my Ministers to acquaint without delay the Committee on

Constitutional Laws with the points which I consider essential."

Thus the Marshal claimed the power for seven years, kept his Ministers, and demanded the vote of "regular institutions," but without uttering the word Republic. This was indeed the Broglie policy.

The Message was applauded, because it extricated everybody. M. Casimir-Perier took note of what concerned "regular institutions." M. Batbie, President of the Committee of Thirty, declared that the latter's report would be ready by the following Monday. M. Raoul Duval reiterated without success his usual request for an appeal to the country.

The Monarchical solution was now definitely rejected; the idea of an appeal to the country was not even taken into consideration. One more battle remained to be fought: that of the personal Septennate, or, as Gambetta called it, the question of the Stathouderate.

IV.

Constitutional Programme.

The Lefts were uneasy. They had played the Marshal's game, perhaps too well. On the 10th July, M. de Fourtou demanded of the Committee of Thirty, in the name of the Marshal: the establishment of a ballot for each "arrondissement,"[1] the right of Dissolution with or without the assent of the Senate, and the right of appointing "in a large measure" the members of the Upper House. This seemed like the preparation of a personal power; the Marshal was certainly not working for himself; then for whom was he working?

A leading article in the *Figaro*, by M. de Saint-Genest, so pointedly described the Septennate as a sort of

[1] A district composed of several "communes."

Anti-Parliamentary Dictatorship, that the general anxiety deepened. M. Brisson, reading the article from the tribune at a very agitated sitting (11th July), embarrassed the Right, without, however, unmasking its motives.

The Duc d'Aumale.

All eyes, at that time, turned towards the Duc d'Aumale. He had made for himself a considerable position at the head of the Besançon Army Corps. He had an exalted and attractive personality, great courage and intelligence, and he was an open adversary of the Empire. He had sincere friends in the very first rank of Deputies, such as the Duc Decazes and the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier, and he was popular in all society circles, whether sporting or academic, even amongst Liberals. He was a rich man, a man of taste and a sportsman. Perhaps, if he wished it, the wind might blow in his direction.

At this juncture, a very significant modification took place in the Cabinet.

In the balance of rival parties, that which most cleverly dissembled its claims, the Orleanist party, gradually seized upon important situations. The Duc Decazes was the real head of the Ministry. He was supposed to hold in his hand M. Léon Renault, of the Police. Now, perquisitions made in the houses of Bonapartists, in order to seek out the papers of the Appeal to the People Committee, had peremptorily proved the existence and regular workings, if not of that committee, at all events of a sort of occult government, vainly denied by M. Rouher.

The Bonapartist element in the Cabinet was aimed at, and especially the Minister of Finance, M. Magne. It was now observed that this gentleman, with his quiet manners and detached air, had remained, now that he was in power, the avowed though timorous supporter of the Empire, which he had served for eighteen years.

He had convenient attacks of illness, and was elusive when closely pressed. His much-vaunted competency had made the Ministry of Finance a sort of reserved domain for him. He held the purse-strings and disposed of an immense number of subordinates and of many lucrative posts. A Budget incident (he asked for the addition of a half-tenth on indirect taxation, customs, sugar, and registration taxes) was turned to account, on the 15th July, to put him in a minority of 248 against 404. After a motion by M. Wolowski and a very sharp intervention by M. Bocher, whose relations with the Orleans Princes were well known, the hitherto indispensable man resigned. M. de Fourtou linked his fate with that of his colleague. He was allowed to go.

Resignation of MM. Magne and de Fourtou.

On the 20th July, M. Magne was succeeded by M. Mathieu-Bodet, President of the Budget Committee. But the following change was even more significant: General Chabaud La Tour was appointed Minister of the Interior. It was said that the Marshal had offered the portfolio of the Interior to the Duc de Broglie, and that the latter had indicated General de Chabaud La Tour. He was a very gallant soldier, a peerless engineer, and a distinguished debater, but a declared Orleanist, a creature and familiar friend of the Princes. Besides, there was something strange in the unexpected appointment of a General to such a post. It was noticed that, since the time of General Espinasse, in 1851, on the eve of the *Coup d'État*, no military man had held that portfolio. M. Cornélis de Witt, a son-in-law of M. Guizot, was made Under-Secretary of State for the Interior. Orleanism now had unquestionable preponderance in the Cabinet.

The Lefts were therefore alarmed. The usual time for Parliamentary holidays was approaching, and what

had happened during the preceding summer vacation was only too well remembered. Was the game, which had seemed won when a majority was obtained for urgency on the Casimir-Perier motion, to be lost now?

The Assembly had had before it, since the 15th July, the Report of the Committee of Thirty on the Casimir-Perier motion, and on MM. Lambert de Sainte-Croix and Wallon's propositions. It opposed the consideration of the Casimir-Perier motion, and submitted to the Assembly the five first clauses of a Constitutional Bill. Those were the famous "regular institutions" demanded by the Marshal and intended to organise the Septennate. This Bill received the grotesque name of "Ventavonate" after the Reporter chosen by the Committee of Thirty.

According to its clauses, Marshal MacMahon, President of the Republic, would continue to wield under this title the executive power conferred upon him by the Law of the 21st November, 1873. He was to have no responsibility. The Cabinet was to be responsible as a whole. The Legislative power should be vested in two Assemblies, the Chamber of Deputies, and the Senate. The Chamber of Deputies to be elected by Universal Suffrage. The Senate to be composed of some elected members, and some members appointed according to conditions to be determined by a special law. The Marshal-President should have a right to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies. At the expiration of the Marshal's powers, the Council of Ministers should convene both Assemblies, which, united in a Congress, should decide on the course to be followed. During the term of the Marshal's powers, a revision of the Constitutional Laws could only take place on his motion.

This was a Parliamentary Stathouderate, with predominance of the Executive and a fixed term for the

choice of a successor to the Marshal among the different parties. The road was opened to a Parliamentary Monarchy; the word Republic was but a screen to be left standing until the substitution had taken place almost automatically.

The Committee, of course, expressed itself thus on the subject of the Casimir-Perier proposition: "The Republican proclamation demanded by M. Casimir-Perier would not be a remedy; it is better to guarantee for seven years peace within France and the working of a regular Government. If we give to the country, at the expiration of that time, the possibility of keeping or changing the present system without a revolution and without a shock, we shall have done all that prudence permits and all that patriotism demands."

What a disappointment for the Lefts; was the Casimir-Perier motion to prove abortive?

The discussion of the Report was fixed for the Thursday, 23rd July. M. Batbie, President of the Committee of Thirty, announced on the 24th July that the Bill on the composition of the Second Chamber had now been examined, and that the Committee would soon be able to submit to the Assembly, "the complete text of the Bills which had been referred to it."

The Right, however, was not ready. On the motion of M. de Castellane, it was decided to postpone until after the vacation the debate on the Constitutional proposition of M. Ventavon, but to discuss the Casimir-Perier motion at once.

In spite of several efforts to obtain an adjournment, the battle initiated by M. Casimir-Perier on the proclamation of the Republic, on the name, on the word, opened on the 23rd July and lasted a whole week. Again this time, the two Centres faced each other, measured their forces, and prepared for the fray. The question was whether

the hesitating section of the Right Centre would be won over by those members who had remained faithful to the Monarchy or by those who had Republican leanings. M. d'Audiffret-Pasquier was, so to speak, the bone of contention.

M. Lambert de Sainte-Croix, who had initiated the system which had prevailed with the Committee, opposed the Casimir-Perier resolution: "Let us get to the bottom of things. Your proposition really means the Republic without conditions. And to us, who, desiring a Monarchy, have refused a Monarchy without conditions, you offer the Republic without conditions."

This was indeed the weak point of the Casimir-Perier motion. If it could not win the game at the first stroke, it was hopelessly defeated; the risk was a great one.

The position of the Committee was not better: "You want to organise a Government," said M. Lambert de Sainte-Croix. "We wish it also; well then, why do we not begin by organising the Government that we have?" But this Government was not the application of an idea, of a principle, but power placed in the hands of one person: a great weakness in a land of idealists and in an Assembly of lawyers and logicians.

M. Casimir-Perier defended his motion, but heavily and painfully, like a prisoner at the bar. He held out imploring hands towards his personal friends, his political friends of yesterday, his brother-in-law, addressing each of them familiarly, personally, as in a private conversation: "You, General de Cissey, were, like myself, a member of the Cabinet which, on the 9th May, 1873, introduced the proposed Constitutional Law. You, M. Mathieu-Bodet, and you, M. Caillaux, signed, on the 24th May, a Republican declaration, in order to 'put an end to a provisional state of things which is compromising the

affairs of the State.' You, Duc Decazes, said on the 12th March, 1873, that you were one of those who considered that an indefinite prolongation of a provisional system would be fatal to France." Finally, a direct appeal to his brother-in-law, the respected chief of the waverers, the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier. "The honourable M. Lambert de Sainte-Croix, alluded a moment ago to the opinion expressed on the 14th December, 1873, by one of the dearest friends I have in this Assembly; he reminded you that M. le Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier, while adhering to this Republic, which he called the *Res publica* in the right sense of the word, concluded by saying, 'But do not ask of us a denial of the past or an act of faith.' . . . Well, we do not consider that it is a denial of the past to resign ourselves to accept another form of Government." The words "resign ourselves" were caught up and repeated. It was true that the speaker had submitted to what he considered the inevitable, and he now invited others to do likewise.

It was left for the Duc de Broglie to raise the tone of the debate and to overwhelm with proud sarcasm the humble embarrassment of M. Casimir-Perier. He had held himself aloof so far, but he now came forward and proved himself to be worth a whole army. Never was his tone more cutting, his logic more powerful, his manner more politely ironical.

Speech by the Duc de Broglie.

He knew that the weak point of his argument lay in the cause he had to defend; he therefore took the offensive. He attacked the Republic; not only in general but each Republic in particular: the Republic of the Convention and that of the Directoire; the Republic of 1848 and that of 1851, all of which, he said, ended either in anarchy or in Cæsarism; the Republic according to M. Casimir-Perier, "a newly-fledged Republican whose education

was by no means completed"; according to M. Laboulaye, "who will stand no raillery about the two Houses"; according to M. Gambetta, "another Professor of Republican Doctrines"; M. Louis Blanc "also a graduate in Socialism, *doctor utriusque juris*," and M. Jules Grévy, "whose amendment has become famous."

These barbed arrows stung; but the speaker continued in his impressive, though weak, voice; men gathered round the tribune in order to hear better. "And these contradictions, inherent to the Republican system, these various constitutions, organising as they do conflicts or disorder, are to be imposed upon us without a discussion . . . !"

After a few words of praise for the Monarchy—flowers on a coffin, as the speaker cleverly suggested—he lingered with some pleasure over the defence of the system he had founded. This organisation, practical, simple, and elastic, open to constant revision, was admirably suited to the difficulties of the time, combining as it did the advantages both of a Republic and of the Monarchy. It avoided that leap in the dark to which another speaker had alluded.

And, here, the Duc de Broglie dealt in his turn with those who had been aimed at by M. Casimir-Perier's familiar pathos: the members of the dissenting Right Centre. Instead of imploring them, he enlightened and warned them, frightened them, even. "I ask the honourable authors of the proposition whether, supposing they secure a majority for this vague proclamation of a Republic which they contemplate, they are perfectly sure that they will on the morrow secure a majority to organise it, to give it the institutions, definitions, and appreciation, which are lacking in their formula. For, if they are not, it is a very dangerous thing to launch among the public, whose imagination will be working

and whose memories will be awakened by the word, the proclamation of a Republic in a chaotic state. . . ."

These words gave the finishing stroke to the Casimir-Perier motion, so obviously simple, bold in its very simplicity. The battle was won. The Duc de Broglie said to the Vicomte de Meaux, as he came down from the tribune: "This was a feat of strength; I could not do it again."

It was a feat indeed, for it wrenched away from Destiny a solution which had seemed imminent; a speech, or rather a man, a leader, had modified and suspended opinions. The Duc de Broglie had reappeared, and his troops, who had deserted him, had gathered round him once again. With his many faults, and blinded though he was by the assurance of his own superiority, he was a leader, the victorious hero of the moment.

The veteran M. Dufaure intervened to counterbalance the effect of his harangue. He dealt roughly with the sophisms of his adversary. The Republic need not be vague or chaotic, since the Assembly was free to support it with those institutions which seemed most to conform with the interests of the country. What was indeed vague was the existing system, a system without a past, without a future, and without a name. "None of you, except the Duc de La Rochefoucauld," said he, addressing the Right, "has asked that the Monarchy be proclaimed. Let us come to the only practical issue, let us found a Republic. A Government cannot be founded on the life of a man, were he Napoleon himself. Such an attempt can only bring confusion and anarchy."

M. Dufaure was right, but the impression remained.

The Government intervened. General de Cissey read a somewhat confused declaration. He opposed

the Casimir-Perier motion, which merely contained an exposition of doctrine; he asked the Assembly to pass laws giving an efficient organisation to the Government, that is: a Second Chamber, the right of dissolution and an electoral system. "Let us organise for seven years to begin with: later on, the country, still holding full mastery of itself and enlightened by events, can pronounce on its own destiny."

The Wallon Amendment.

The excellent M. Wallon here interposed. His life was spent in polishing and refining the constitutional project which he submitted periodically to the Assembly. He had noticed the weak point of the Casimir-Perier proposal, and he pointed it out: "M. Casimir-Perier's motion proclaims the Republic, but does not create it, for it refers the creation of it to a committee." And once again M. Wallon moved his resolution, modified, attenuated and softened, in the form of an amendment. But there was now more confidence in his tone, he no longer felt alone. Certain members of the Right Centre, recognising in his formula something of the spirit which animated themselves when they were seeking for a means of acting without speaking, had come towards him; conversations had taken place. M. Wallon, at the tribune, pointed to the moderate character of his resolution. "My motion does not proclaim the Republic," said he, "but you might say that, in reality, it creates it. It does not proceed from enthusiasm; it does not claim to establish the best possible form of Government. . . ." Such very reasonable, soothing and modest speaking seemed out of place amidst the passionate excitement which prevailed. No one heard M. Wallon, Deputies were not listening, and the infant Constitution which he carried under his cloak was born among general inattention and the noise of conversation. "I fear that I am tiring you," said the

father of the Future, timidly; "I will descend from the tribune."

The Wallon amendment, on being put to the vote, was rejected by 363 votes against 31.

But who were these thirty-one voters? We find, amongst other names, those of MM. Adrien Léon, Cézanne, Denormandie, Vicomte d'Haussonville, Léonce de Lavergne, Lefèvre-Pontalis, Luro, Passy, Comte de Pourtalès, Francisque Rive, Savary, Comte de Ségur, and—note this name—M. Target. This was the group of Dissidents which was one day to decide the victory.

At last a vote was taken on the Casimir-Perier resolution. It was rejected by 374 votes to 333. The Duc de Broglie might well be proud of his success, which was great. However, the division on the Wallon amendment made him recognise the importance of what was slowly rising out of the shadow, and which could not escape his political experience and parliamentary knowledge. Still, he hesitated. He thought that he had gained much because he had succeeded in gaining time.

The Dissolution Motion.

The Lefts felt discomfited and wounded. The Extreme Left, which had abstained, triumphed. Why should the great name of Republic be recklessly exposed to such a fiasco? Gambetta was discouraged. A friend of M. Thiers, M. de Maleville, mounted the tribune, and supported the motion for dissolution, introduced by the Left Centre, and in which the influence of the former President could be felt. He proposed that the general election should take place on the 6th September.

Urgency having been rejected, the motion was referred to a preliminary committee, and came up for discussion on the 29th July. It was combated by M. Depeyre, who acknowledged the success of the Right and the

unity noticeable in recent ballots, "against you and in spite of you," said he, addressing the Left. He ended his harangue, however, by a confession: "I am one of those who wait until the last day and the last hour before giving up hope."

The Parliamentary recess now had to be reckoned with. The Maleville proposition was rejected by 375 votes against 332.

M. Gambetta's paper, *La République Française*, wrote: "The struggle is over, at least as far as we are concerned. We now think of nothing but the country. . . . The Republic will never come from an Assembly which, believing itself called to re-establish the Monarchy, has been branded with impotence. The Republic can only be born of popular ballot-urns. The sitting of yesterday proves that those urns will be opened without much delay."

By prolonging the *status quo* until after the holidays, a sufficient result seemed to have been obtained, and now, after a bucolic speech from General Changarnier, and a resolution by M. Malartre, the Assembly prepared to adjourn from the 5th August until the 30th November, and to postpone until that date the discussion of constitutional laws.

On the day when that resolution was passed, M. Batbie —as if in order to attenuate the bad impression caused by a further postponement—promised in the name of the Committee of Thirty, to produce very shortly a Report on the creation and attributes of a Second House.

The promise was kept, on the 3rd August, by M. Antonin Lefèvre-Pontalis. It was the Duc de Broglie's Bill, in a slightly different form; the representation of "capacities" and interests, a precaution against Universal Suffrage. For a further security, the Committee proposed to grant to the President of the Republic the right of

appointing a portion of the Senate. The supreme resource would therefore be a House of contest and of resistance, supported by a strongly organised Executive. In the Reporter's own words, they sought "a centre of resistance against the predominating power," a combination of two authorities supporting each other by a common right of dissolution; such was the idea whence proceeded the creation of the Assembly, which was "to receive and to hold in trust the fortunes of France."

The Senate was to be nothing else, in fact, but a prolongation of the National Assembly, or rather of the Right majority. Constituted by this majority, and by the Executive emanating from it, it was to survive them both by its Life Members, and to ensure the prevalence in the future of their common views. It was to keep Universal Suffrage in check; Universal Suffrage, that ghost which had haunted the whole of the debate, which had had to be accepted in the course of a session during which every effort had been made to guard against it, and which, it was felt, would surely end by having the last word.

The Marshal's Government was rudderless during that crisis, when the present failed it and only the future remained. It was reduced, under the pretext of securing an order in no wise threatened, to maintaining a state of siege in those departments where it had been established during the War or during the Commune; and this in spite of repeated complaints from moderate men, M. Lamy in particular, who, on the 31st July, moved an amendment to that purpose. The amendment was rejected by 366 to 296.

Gambetta's Speech.

Gambetta made a last effort to obtain an earlier date of meeting, and to make more progress with the formation of Republican institutions. He spoke towards the end of the sitting. His speech was a

monument of good sense and moderation. "The Republic is the inevitable and you ought to accept it, not in a spirit of party and sentiment, but as true politicians. You should make the best of realities (turning to the Right), make up your minds to the existence, in this country, of an invincible Democracy which cannot be ignored, and which will certainly have the last word. . . . You ought to set resolutely to work and understand that your place is marked in this Government of a Free Democracy, that you have a part to play, a most important part, secured for you by your social authority, your precedents, your leisure. . . . The Conservatives are making a political mistake, perhaps an irreparable one, when having proved the impossibility of re-establishing the Monarchy . . . they refuse a fruitful alliance with Democracy . . . and walk into that narrow path of the Septennate, which will perhaps end by being called a Stathouderate. . . ."

The speaker implored the Assembly not to commit that mistake. He, too, aimed not only at the present but at the future: "Meanwhile, you are fated to live, you have children, you must prepare the future of coming generations: do you think you can do so apart from Democracy? Will it be for a coalition of three or four hundred Deputies to turn the tide of the French Revolution? Do you believe that? If you do not believe it, you must take a decision, you must make up your minds, strongly and energetically. Go for your vacation—go, and come back in a month. . . . If you can establish the Monarchy, you will do so; if you see that the Republic alone is possible, you will establish it; but you will create a strong Government, a Government capable of bringing, what all passionately desire, honour and glory for France."

Those prophetic words, that powerful appeal were not

heard: ears were closed. The great mass of the Conservative party was unsettled, but promises made, a mistaken sense of honour, exaggerated anxieties, interested intrigues, and a medley of more or less creditable feelings held every one back. The motion to adjourn until the 30th November was carried.

Émile de Girardin.

Émile de Girardin, who had just taken over the management of the *France*, and who evidently followed the general evolution towards the Republic, held the same language as Gambetta. He advised the Right to accept the inevitable, and to follow the movement frankly and loyally by helping to organise the true Republic.

He quoted figures in support of his statements. The by-elections which had taken place since the General Election of the 8th February, 1871, had given the following results:—Out of 158 by-elections, were elected:

126 Republican candidates,
22 Royalists,
10 Imperialists.

He stated that France had become Republican: "France, mutilated on two occasions, twice ransomed, bending under the weight of taxes more innumerable even than crushing, France now relies on no Prince to make her once again what she was; she relies on herself, and on herself alone." And he concluded, logically and powerfully, against any intermediate system, and particularly against the organisation of the Septennate: "We cannot have two sovereign powers. If we accept that of numbers and the law of majorities, as did Marshal MacMahon in his speech of the 26th May, 1873, the logic of the elective right is that it can only be limited by itself. . . . It is a very great mistake to attempt to reconcile two powers which exclude each other. One of the two must have

the last word. What do you oppose, by your system, to Universal Suffrage? A man, appointed for seven years. A conflict is inevitable, with his resignation for its obvious issue. If France will not have the Republic, she must give up Universal Suffrage; but if she refuse to do so, she had better make up her mind to it and frankly organise the Republic."

These arguments struck against a solid block of illusions, hopes and convictions which only broke up very slowly.

Thirty years later one of the most distinguished men of that time, the Vicomte de Meaux, whose precious *Souvenirs* bring much light on many things, still reproached Gambetta and his party with "having made the Republic depend upon the monopolising of power by the 'new social strata,' at the exclusion of every other class." Gambetta's conduct during that critical period, his speeches, his repeated appeals to the Right for assistance, the solemn words quoted above, his struggles with the more obstinate members of his party, everything, on the contrary, proves the justice and sincerity of his feelings. He would have had the Republic founded by the whole of France, "united France," as Émile de Girardin called it (20th August, 1874). "The Royalists would be making no sacrifice, but acting both wisely and patriotically, if they would sincerely adhere to the Republic. . . . Then should we have a united France, a Republican France—Republican in a new sense of the word without any unpleasant associations with the Republican past. Then should we see France, under the rule of the Elective Right, more powerful, more prosperous, and more glorious than ever."

The Right was not unaware of the gravity of circumstances nor of the importance of the choice which it was about to make. The Duc de Broglie himself had said,

in his recent speech: "If the Republic is voted, if the principle becomes law, we must all submit to it . . . it would be puerile and invidious to do otherwise. I am convinced that no one in this Assembly would give way to such a feeling. I expect no less from the patriotism of all parties."

Were these words a mere rhetorical concession, a clever dialectical *ruse?* No. They were too weighty, too exalted not to have been meant; and the part played by M. de Broglie in the conversations which prefaced the Wallon amendment would prove it if necessary.

Where, then, was the cause of the misunderstanding which persisted so unfortunately between men who on either side lacked neither intelligence nor good intentions?

The "ruling classes," by frankly and at once adhering to Republican institutions, might not only have brought in those guarantees and precautions which seemed to them indispensable, but, up to a certain point, they would have sheltered their principles, their doctrines and their interests. They need then no longer have feared popular suffrage, but welcomed it. Reforms would have met with generous and valuable support from Conservatives. Political parties would have vied with each other in the effort to bring about the welfare of the greatest number, and the revolutionary idea, no longer finding any ground for attack, would have disappeared or become singularly attenuated. Let us again quote Emile de Girardin, who saw so far and so clearly: "The successive counsellors of Marshal MacMahon misled his good sense and his patriotism by repeating in every key that it was necessary to 'organise his powers.' . . . The organisation of the powers of the Septennate means the organisation of the conflict, and therefore of the Revolution."

That was indeed to be the result of the blunder committed. Marshal MacMahon, whom every one esteemed, was to be the first victim of a mistake of which thirty years have not exhausted the consequences.

It is not so much violence as obstinacy which ruins parties in France. Men absurdly seize upon new formulas, and equally absurdly cling to them when they should come to an end. Out of sheer complacency people hesitate to fight errors which seem harmless at first. Spread by chance, they are retained by party spirit; fear of general opinion is part of French sociability. And, gradually, mists have darkened and thickened the whole atmosphere.

In order to explain the conduct of the Right at that critical hour, we must take into account an attitude too rapidly assumed, and also a short-sighted obstinacy, sometimes mistaken for loyalty; finally, that habit, too general with the race, of postponing difficulties until the morrow.

Where an American would say "Forward!" a Frenchman says "Patience!" Patience too often means Sufferance. The country still suffers, after so many years, from decisions full of indecision.

CHAPTER II

THE SEPTENNATE—FRANCE AND EUROPE

I. Practical activity of the Assembly.—The Budget of 1875.—Various Military Measures.—Great Public Works.—The Phylloxera.—Social Questions and Parliamentary Inquiry on Labour.—The Roussel Law on the Protection of Young Children.—Reform of the *Baccalauréat.*

II. External Politics.—German Diplomacy in 1874.—The Ischl meeting.—The Kissingen affair and the Ultramontane Question.—The Decree of Cardinal Guibert.—Recall of the *Orénoque.*—Spanish Affairs.—A German Intervention feared.—Difficulties between Paris and Madrid.—The Alfonsist Restoration.—Rivalry between Prince Gortschakoff and Prince Bismarck.—Eastern Affairs.—First Outlines of a Franco-Russian Alliance.—Attitude of Great Britain.—The Suez Canal and the Egyptian Question.—The Tonquin affair.—Policy of the United States.—International Arbitration.—The Brussels Conference and International Law.—International Sanitary Police.

III. Society in 1874.—Parliamentary Holidays.—The Marshal's Journeys.—Parliamentary Bye-Elections.—Departmental and Municipal Elections.—Return of the Assembly.—Position of Parties.—Presidential Message.—First Reading of the Law on Higher Education.—The Assembly votes for a Parliamentary Inquiry on Bonapartist proceedings.

I

M. THIERS used to say, "We have much too much politics in this country." There is always a fear lest history should fall into the same error, and allow itself to be invaded by the facile abundance of parliamentary papers. A representative Assembly is not a whole people; the voice raised at the tribune rarely carries beyond the surrounding walls. Many accurate—

and many false—books will be written by publishing extracts from the *Journal Officiel.*

Whilst bringing much eagerness to its specially political and constitutional work, the Assembly did not neglect its other duties; whilst declaring itself a constituent body, it did not forget its legislative functions. It carried out the duties of the housewife, so to speak, with a carefulness which caused one to overlook the caprices or fancies of the *grande dame.*

The Budget of 1875.

The Budget of 1875 had been submitted on the 12th January, 1874: Receipts, 2,573,525,000 fr.; expenditure 2,569,163,000 fr. It showed, apparently, a surplus of 4,362,000 fr. For this purpose, it took into account the 146,483,000 fr. of new taxes previously suggested, towards which, as has been seen,[1] the National Assembly, by the Laws of 30th October, 1873, 19th February, 1874, and 21st March, 1874, had only voted 121,858,000 fr. The receipts, thanks to the normal increase in the revenue from taxes and to the produce of the ten centimes added to the principal of the three first direct contributions—having been estimated at an increase of 40,263,425 fr., and the expenditure having swollen by 36,473,702 fr.—the Budget was put forward with a real deficit of 20,263,000 fr.

After 1874, as the Assembly refused to create new taxes, the difficulty in balancing the account was very great. In order to achieve this, M. Magne on the 5th June, 1874, submitted a corrective budget of ways and means.

He proposed the addition of another half *décime* to the indirect duties subjected to *décimes* by the laws already in force; viz. registration duties, customs, indirect contributions, and sugar. This half *décime* would produce 42,097,000 fr.

[1] Vol. ii., p. 350.

The Budget requiring only 20,000,000 fr., the surplus was to be appropriated to the estimated expenditure on the organisation of the army and the execution of extraordinary public works.

In M. Magne's mind, the produce of the half *décime* during the current financial year would have covered the deficit of the Budget of 1874.

A year earlier, M. Magne would have been followed blindly. But, as has been seen, M. Magne had somewhat lost his personal influence over the Assembly. Specialists are only invulnerable so long as they confine themselves to their speciality. He no longer seemed to be the indispensable Minister. The measures which he proposed had this defect, that they would be felt simultaneously by every class of taxpayer. The hour of self-sacrifice was passed—that of the future elections was at hand. The Budget Committee, which, for the first time, comprised a Republican majority, decided to reject the half *décime*.

On the 15th July, M. Magne defended his proposals in an honourable and prudent manner. He fought against the solution proposed by the Budget Committee, viz. the reduction by 50 millions of the annual repayment of 200 millions to the Bank of France.[1]

The "Reporter" of the Budget Committee was a very distinguished economist, M. Wolowski. He strongly attacked M. Magne's system, pointing out that the indirect taxes—already subjected to numerous surtaxes—were being asked for all they could produce. Voting another half *décime* would merely mean inserting a fictitious item of receipt.

The question became a political one. M. Magne was beaten on the 18th July by a majority of 10.

[1] Of 1,530 millions lent by the Bank to the State in 1871, the latter still owed, in 1874, a sum of 867 millions.

M. Mathieu-Bodet, Minister of Finance.

M. Mathieu-Bodet succeeded M. Magne, at the Finance Ministry. The discussion on the Budget of 1875—on the general report of M. Léon Say—came to an end on the 5th August. The Bank of France would not agree to the diminution in the repayments; but, by a new agreement, signed on the 4th August and ratified by the Assembly on the 5th August, the Bank facilitated the making good of the deficit by entering into a financial transaction: it placed a loan of 40 millions[1] at the disposal of the State. This was the inauguration of "expedient" Budgets.

According to the law of the 22nd July, 1887, the real figures of the Budget of 1875 were these—

Receipts . .	2,705,431,606,78 fr.
Expenditure .	2,626,868,028,97 fr.
Surplus . .	78,563,577,81 fr.

Such a result proved that the Legislature might have trusted more to the elasticity and financial strength of France. When public affairs are well managed, and a country feels confidence in the future, people pay willingly enough.

"Liquidation Account."

The normal Budget was sufficient to meet the needs of the time—considerably increased, to be sure—but the effects of the war had brought about the opening of a special account—the "Liquidation Account."

On the 4th August, 1874, on the report of M. Gouin, the National Assembly opened in this account—for the year 1875—a total credit of 176,979,000 francs—to be appropriated as follows: War Ministry, 121 millions; Ministry of Marine, 10 millions; and for arrears of the war expenditure, 30 millions, etc.

[1] Mathieu-Bodet's *Les Finances Françaises*, vol. i., p. 278 *et seq.*

The Assembly, on the 28th July, voted the third reading of a proposal by M. Denormandie, appropriating a sum of 26 millions of francs to the victims of the damage caused by the war.

A Special Committee was to act within the limits of this credit, in view of which the Minister of Finance was authorised to create 52,000 liquidation bonds, payable to bearer—repayable at par at the end of twenty-five years—and carrying interest at 5 per cent.

The reconstitution of the Army remained one of the principal preoccupations of the Government and of the nation. Marshal MacMahon did not relax his efforts. The fear of ever-imminent external complications was a constant stimulus; never did military matters need such favourable and generous dispositions from all parties.

The non-commissioned officers represent the bone-structure of the Army, as the officers stand for its brain and nervous system. Special committees were entrusted with the study of a Staff Bill and of a Bill concerning non-commissioned officers.

The Staff Bill was not to be discussed during the present session, the general debate on it having unanimously been postponed until the second reading. But, as it was necessary to settle without delay the inferior staff of the new regiments, and also to encourage valuable men who had been through the war to remain in the army, General Chareton's Bill, concerning improvements to be brought into the condition of non-commissioned officers, both in the Army and the Navy, was passed by the Assembly on the 10th July.

Considerations of national security came before everything. The following advantages were granted: An extra pay of 30 centimes a day to re-enlisted non-commissioned officers, and a supplement of 20 centimes after ten

years' service. From thirty-five years, they were entitled, under certain specified conditions, to a proportionate pension, besides which they received a daily allowance whilst waiting to be appointed to one of the civilian berths reserved for them by the law of 1873.

The sitting of the 17th July was given up to a rapid discussion of the Bill determining the whole of the measures taken for the protection of the new Eastern frontier. This Bill, which had been prepared two years before by the Army Committee, and of which General Baron de Chabaud La Tour was Reporter, was connected with the plan which made of Paris the military centre of France.[1]

This required a sum of 88,500,000 francs. In 1874 the Assembly attributed to those expenses a sum of 29 millions on account, to be deducted from the amount set apart for the War Department in the Liquidation Account.

On the 18th July, General de Cissey, Minister for War, introduced a Bill concerning the administration of the Army, proposed by a Committee of which M. Léon Bouchard was the Reporter.

On the 1st August, the Assembly adopted the law organising the compulsory purchase of horses.

On the same day, the Assembly, in order to favour the organisation of Rifle Clubs, authorised the introduction into France of loaded cartridges, specially intended for that purpose.

Finally, before separating on the 4th August, the Chamber passed the law authorising the Government to deal with Departments and Communes, in order to insure, with their assistance, the billeting of the Army: this was the starting point of a work rendered necessary by the new distribution of troops over the country.

[1] See vol. ii., p. 488.

Railways. Civil reorganisation was concurrent with military reorganisation. On the 13th June, after two years' work, the Committee of Inquiry into Railways, Waterways, and means of Transport, made its Report and Recommendations. This was to form the basis of the programme of great public works, which was realised later on under the name of the "Freycinet Plan."

The Simplon Tunnel. The tunnelling of the Simplon was decided upon. The company which had taken the initiative was trying to bring about an understanding between the Swiss, Italian and French Governments. A resolution to vote a sum of 48,000,000 francs as a subsidy towards the expenses of the enterprise had been submitted to the Assembly. But it was referred back to the Government on the proposition of MM. Baragnon and Lepère. This meant a postponement, perhaps an indefinite one. The Simplon affair was badly started, and retarded in its progress by conflicting interests.

The Sahara Sea. M. de Lesseps, whose enterprising mind, perhaps a little aged, was busy with numerous and insufficiently studied projects, had accorded the influence of his name to a singular project which consisted in bringing the waters of the Mediterranean into the Lowlands situated south of Algerian and Tunisian territory, in order to create an "interior sea," said to have previously existed. The affair had been cleverly launched and excited some interest. The Assembly, on receiving a demand for help, voted a sum of 10,000 francs towards preliminary inquiries, but had the wisdom to go no farther.

Pasteur's Pension. The admirable discoveries of Pasteur excited passionate interest. On the 18th July, on M. Paul Bert's report, a law was passed granting a pension of 12,000 francs to the illustrious *savant*, as a national recompense.

The Phylloxera.

A terrible disease had befallen the principal riches of the country, the vineyards. The first touches of it had been felt about 1865-1866, almost simultaneously, in the Departments of the Gard, of Vaucluse, in the neighbourhood of Bordeaux, and near Cognac. Suddenly, in the midst of flourishing vineyards, plants would be seen to fade, turn yellow, and wither away; the fruit rotted, and the plant died. Then, neighbouring plants were attacked, the unknown disease spread, and whole fields perished.

None of the ills which had hitherto smitten vines—particularly oidium, which had appeared about 1850, to be defeated by sulphur—had presented similar characteristics of mysterious propagation and absolute destruction. Violent discussions arose between vine-growers and men of science, even in the Académie des Sciences. The new disease was attributed either to a prolonged drought, or to the age of the vines.

In the meanwhile, more and more Departments were struck. In 1870, nearly all the vines of Provence and a part of those of the Languedoc were attacked. In 1876, the whole banks of the Rhône, the Hérault, Gard, Drôme, and Bouches-du-Rhône, were invaded. Burgundy, particularly near Villefranche and even Mâcon, was threatened. At the same moment, the Médoc, Gironde and Charentes were entirely contaminated, whilst the disease spread in the neighbouring Departments. Towards the end of 1878, all the vines south of the Loire had succumbed; the fatal stain spread as far as the Côte d'Or on the one side and the Loiret on the other. Save for Champagne, which appeared to be immune, the annihilation of French vineyards seemed inevitable.

It was an immense desolation. The aspect of the devastated fields was lamentable. The ground being

usually unfitted for any other culture, the dead vines had not even been removed, and their blackened branches rose from the ground like the crosses of a cemetery. All that which had been joy and gaiety in those vivacious Southern provinces was now changed to silence and despair. The population emigrated to America or Algeria, villages remained empty, gardens abandoned.

Between 1865 and 1882, the area of vineyards destroyed by the phylloxera reached 763·799 hectares;[1] 642·078 were invaded. A surface of 7,400·000 hectares, therefore, one-half of the total area of French vineyards, was ruined or jeopardised in less than fifteen years, the lifetime of one generation. The ruin caused to all branches of agriculture, industry and commerce could only be expressed in millions.

By dint of multiplied researches into the origin of the evil, the cause of it was at last discovered. Already in 1868, some vine-growers in the Hérault, MM. Planchon, Gaston Bazille and Sahupt, had noticed, on diseased vines, the presence of a tiny insect of many metamorphoses, to which they gave the name of *Phylloxera vastatrix.* The studies of M. Planchon, in France and in America, those of an official Commission under the chairmanship of the chemist J. B. Dumas, the researches of M. Balbiani at the Collége de France, gradually revealed the life-history of this dangerous parasite. It was a native of America, and had been introduced into France by American plants. It was also discovered that certain American vines, without being altogether immune, offered more resistance than French vines.

Various modes of treatment were invented and developed. M. Bayle, in the neighbourhood of Aigues-Mortes, noted the immunity of vines planted in the moist, calcareous sands of that region. M. Louis Faucon, at

[1] One hectare is about equal to 2½ acres.—*Trans.*

Graveson, obtained remarkable results by the submersion and protracted flooding of the vines, a system he followed already in 1869. Baron Thénard and M. Dumas proved the salutary effects of carbon sulphide. The American plants above mentioned (*Œstivales*, *Riparia*, *Rupestris*, *Labroussem*) resisted the insect, which did not attack more than their bark; those species, however, only produced wines of poor quality, and growers had recourse to a process of budding French species on American roots; this was initiated by the Montpellier School of Agriculture and the remarkable works of Professor Grasset. Rich landowners, such as the Duchesse de Fitz-James, led the way, and war upon the parasite was organised everywhere.

The question had long preoccupied public authorities, and the National Assembly did not lose sight of it. On the 21st July, 1874, urgency having been declared in favour of a motion by M. Destremx, a prize of 300,000 francs was voted for the "invention of an efficacious and economical means, applicable on all ordinary soils, for the destruction of *Phylloxera* and the prevention of its ravages." This was but a sign of attention and good-will. But the Assembly had thus inaugurated the first studies which were to result in the laws of 1878 and 1879, and to bring more efficacious aid to the devastated regions.

The National Assembly and Labour Question.

The duty of mutual protection and assistance which binds together the districts, professions and families of one nation, and which is, on the whole, the essence of the State concept, did not find the National Assembly indifferent. It would not have consented to admit that there was such a thing as a "social question"—redoubtable word!—but it had begun to consider certain social questions. And that meant that it did not absolutely deny the principle of the

interference of the State in particular relations concerning the organisation of Labour.

On the morrow of the Commune, every thesis, system or reform which seemed to yield to the exigencies of the new Socialist Schools inspired apprehension and terror. Those timorous *bourgeois* chiefly sought middle courses and temporary palliatives.

Their convictions and feelings were complex. Many minds were still full of the old idea of a relationship between master and man, consisting of nothing but authority on the one side and obedience on the other. For such, any concession meant confusion; the social peril was identical with the political peril.

But there were others, more numerous still, whose hearts had been startled and moved by a first appeal. They wanted to know more, to be enlightened, to touch, or, at least, to see the sores; they felt embarrassed and awkward between traditions that they respected and the future that they foresaw. Some consciences were awakened and disturbed by Christian feelings; they knew the horrible misery which modern industry had inflicted upon the poorest classes, and the knowledge troubled them. Their master was Le Play.

The lessons taught by that valiant heart and original mind had sunk deeply in, for they invoked Christ's own words. He had brought many facts and faults home to modern society; with a prophet's authority, he had announced the misfortunes which were about to befall France. According to him, the road to social salvation consisted in a determined moral effort. His doctrines spread among the enlightened *bourgeoisie* and the groups of the majority, and adapted themselves to their inward yearnings, giving a shape and an object to their somewhat vague aspirations.

Le Play and his Doctrine.

The motion introduced on the 24th April, 1872, by the

Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier was an outcome of similar feelings. It proposed a Parliamentary inquiry on *Labour Conditions in France.* The inquiry was ordered. It was but the sequel to a series of inquiries which had been going on for many years: researches on Paris industries in 1828, on French industry in 1834, an inquiry opened in 1848 by the Assemblée Constituante, and many inquiries ordered by the Imperial Government, notably that of 1858 on wages, etc., etc.

The labours of the Committee which was appointed in order to proceed to those new researches, were prolonged from April 1872 until the end of 1875. Like the sentiments of the Assembly which had ordered them, their results were uncertain in what concerned the doctrine and the judicial system, but useful and far-seeing in what concerned immediate applications and relief; under the *bourgeois* hesitancy could be felt a breath of that paternal Socialism, with evangelical tendencies, which Christian Socialists were about to bring to light, and which was distrusted by political Socialists.

The debate on principle which opened before the Committee was a very important one. It marks a knot in economic history, and ended, it is true, in nothing but a schism which arrested all effectual measures.

The question was the very principle of Labour associations or syndicates. The old individualistic traditions of the Revolution, forbidding professional associations, had long been beaten back, first by facts, stronger than any laws; then by doctrines; finally by the example of foreigners, and, in particular, of those famous *Trades Unions* which had at that very moment achieved a great success, two Labour men, Thomas Burt and Macdonald, having been elected to the House of Commons. France followed this movement, though a long way behind.

A Committee of Inquiry.

The Committee included energetic supporters of the liberty of association. Already in 1871 the *Union Républicaine* had demanded the repeal of clauses 291–294 of the Civil Code, regulating questions of association. The views of this party were soon to be embodied in the Lockroy Bill, introduced on the 4th July, 1876, which had for its object the constitution and organisation of professional syndicates.

But the majority of the Committee, under the influence of its vice-chairman, M. Ducarre, turned away from any innovations, and even from any investigations in that direction. It even refused to include in its list of questions any request for information concerning Labour associations, and especially Syndicates. On the other hand, the distrust of working-men was aroused: the minutes include no evidence of Labour witnesses. Between the two extremes, Liberal minds, conscious of the generous duty imposed upon legislators by recent crises, were crushed. The Report of M. Tallon, a Deputy whose inclinations were in favour of the co-operative movement, was not adopted by the Committee, and therefore not published by it: the majority let a unique opportunity pass by of opening the door of renewed France to the problems of the future.[1] Such is the cold and proudly indifferent spirit of caste.

Reports of the Committee.

The work of the Committee was summarised in two Reports; that of the Comte de Melun on the moral and material condition of the labouring man, presented on the 27th July, 1875, and that of M. Ducarre, on the 2nd August, on the question of wages and the relations between masters and men.

M. de Melun's Report concluded by somewhat vague considerations of the tendencies of the modern working-

[1] See *La vie morale et intellectuelle des ouvriers* (E. Tallon, Paris, 1877), *Les Classes ouvrières en Europe* (René Lavollée).

man, of the probable development of insurances, of "clubs," of co-operative stores, and by an appeal to the "Divine feelings developed in every one by a wise and religious education." M. Ducarre went more deeply into the subject-matter of the debate, but attacked the general movement, which seemed to him a return to the system of corporations and guilds. He supported the application of the law of 1791 on Associations, and strongly opposed the Syndicate panacea; he declared himself a partisan, absolutely and unconditionally, of the complete liberty of Labour. His was the Economic tradition in its full severity.

This determinedly negative attitude was all the more characteristic that it contrasted with the active solutions adopted by the Assembly as soon as struggles of system were put on one side. That very same Committee supported the Deputies Ambroise Joubert and Tallon—the author of the rejected Report—in their proposition originating the law of the 19th May, 1784, on the protection of children and girls under age employed in industrial trades—with which may be coupled the law of the 7th December, 1874, on the protection of children employed in itinerant professions. The chief provisions of the law of the 19th May concerned, not only the age of admission (twelve at the earliest, ten in some rare exceptions) and the length of time (six hours a day under twelve years of age, twelve hours after that, with prohibition of Sunday, holiday or night work for boys under sixteen and girls under twenty-one), but also the education of young labourers, thus creating an obligation introduced for the first time into the law. The consequences, from the point of view of hygiene, competition and the moral conditions of working classes, may be easily understood; on the other hand, it is easy to imagine the resistance which was manifested in the course of the debate, and which, on

Children's Labour.

several occasions, attacked either the principles or the individual applications of the law.

Inspectors.

One of the effects, by no means the least important, of that legislative reform, was the creation of a corps of fifteen divisional inspectors, appointed and remunerated by the Government, and empowered by the law to enter, either by day or by night, and as frequently as possible, into all establishments, factories, workshops and yards.

What were the political and economic considerations which dictated those reforms? Were they due to the wish of the legislators to propitiate the Sovereign Universal Suffrage? Were they a further manifestation of that struggle between the classes in which the best of tactics often consists in seizing upon and using the adversary's own weapons? Surely thoughts such as these haunted the mind of the majority who passed those laws. It is a remarkable thing, at the same time, that the political parties who were connected with Socialism showed, at the first, but little eagerness to support those slight improvements which were introduced in the name of humanity into the condition of the masses.

If everything be taken into account, it will become evident to unprejudiced eyes that these acts were the result of the progress of civilisation and a spreading enlightenment, the development of a sense of collective pity, which was beginning to transform the nineteenth-century world.

The Roussel Law.

If a still more striking proof be required, it will be found in the fact that, in that same year 1874, the Assembly voted the Roussel law for the protection of infants, and especially of nurse-children. Here supervision was introduced, no longer between masters and men, but between parents and children. Social relief came to the assistance of poverty-stricken or

neglected families. The object of this law—in which a dawning anxiety, caused by the diminution of the birth-rate, is apparent, is expressed in its Clause I: "Every child under two years of age who is brought up, by hand or otherwise, by salaried persons, away from his parents' home, becomes *ipso facto* the object of the supervision of public authorities, in order that his life and health may be protected thereby."

The reaction after the events of 1870–1871 affected in other ways the moral direction of the country. The most enlightened, most sensitive part of the nation, the *bourgeoisie*, was deeply moved, if not transformed.

Teaching. The downfall had not been so complete as that of Prussia after Jena; the raising up again was not to be so energetic or so prompt.

The *bourgeoisie*, still a ruling class, concerned itself, as soon as the war was over, with its own recruiting, *i. e.* with methods of Education and with University Studies. For many years to come, the reform of elementary teaching was a party battle-field; debates had already begun concerning the organisation of Higher Education. Secondary teaching was also in question; did it not lead to that diploma which opens the door of the *bourgeois* mandarinate: the *Baccalauréat?*[1]

Towards the end of the Empire, some very pointed criticisms had been uttered concerning the organisation of studies in the *lycées*. M. Duruy had been a forerunner. The example of Germany was beginning to be quoted. After the war, criticisms became multiplied; a spirit of reform had arisen.

Every thing had its share of blame: the inertia and

[1] See: *La Réforme de l'Enseignement Secondaire* (Jules Simon); *La Réforme de l'Enseignement public en France* (Th. Ferneuil); *Baccalauréat et Socialisme* (F. Bastiat, 1850); *Le Baccalauréat et les études classiques* (Victor de Laprade, 1869).

routine in which the University had lingered, following traditional Jesuitic methods; the classical spirit, or rather that sham classical spirit, son of the bastard humanities of the eighteenth century, which made the whole art of Education consist in the preparation of Latin and French composition; boarding-schools and the *Baccalauréat* were not spared.

Unfortunately, these disputes, however lively, did not go very deeply into the matter. Professors alone succeeded in obtaining a hearing, and this highly moral and social problem was kept within the bounds of a scholarly tourney; those investigations, touching as they did the very soul of the nation, were adulterated technical questions. In the eyes of the Professors, who were, again on this occasion, judges in their own cause, the future man who is to be found in every student remains always a pupil.

The reform of secondary teaching was strongly influenced by a book which emanated from a very good authority: M. Michel Bréal's *Quelques mots sur l'Instruction publique*. In it, the example of German methods was strongly held up, the drawbacks in the University System exposed and certain practical remedies suggested; however, it must be recognised that the very crux of the debate, that is: the social standing of the *bourgeoisie* in the midst of Democracy, was left untouched. The sacred Ark, the *Baccalauréat*, was respected and consecrated.

Reforms.

A reform thus minimised was doomed beforehand. Fault was found with Latin verse, Latin translations, memory exercises and mental overwork; and yet it was proposed that matter be added to the curriculum, that memory be taxed further, and that the whole arsenal of modern philosophical sciences be introduced into the already crowded

time-tables. The University shifted its rifle from one shoulder to the other, and prepared to train grammarians instead of rhetoricians.

The result of those polemics was the decree of the 25th July, 1874, modifying the programme of the *baccalauréat ès lettres*, and consequently that of Secondary Education. The following were the principal features of that reform: The examination was henceforth to be taken in two sections, the first at the end of the Rhetoric year, the other on leaving the Philosophy Class. Latin verse was suppressed, but the two competition papers of the first test were still to be a Latin translation and a Latin composition. The oral examination was to bear chiefly upon readings from Greek and Latin authors; Greek studies declined somewhat by reason of the new curriculum. The second test, that which was henceforth to come at the end of the year of Philosophy, included a French composition and a translation from a modern language; oral questions applied to Philosophy, History, Sciences and one modern language. In a word, it was a very cautious reform, hardly breaking at all with University traditions. The exigencies of modern life only made themselves apparent by the large place attributed to living languages.

II

Foreign Policy.

The fall of the Duc de Broglie had left the Duc Decazes at the Quai d'Orsay. With his delicate, slightly pessimistic wit and easy temper, he remained ever valuable, almost indispensable, and had won the good-will of the Marshal, of his colleagues, and of the Assembly. Fortunately for him, this was one of those epochs when the half-mystery which reigns around diplomatic matters gives an

appearance of authority and felicity to the least competent man.

But, if such was the impression made upon the onlookers, the principal actor of the drama which was being played with Germany knew many sleepless nights and anxious awakenings. It was impossible to know what Prince Bismarck wanted, and, perhaps from sheer perversity, perhaps from deep calculation, he constantly let it be thought that he wanted the worst.

The Duc Decazes, in that belief, wrote to one of his confidants on the 9th March, 1874: "I do not know whether I have told you that, at the beginning of the winter, as soon as he came back to Berlin, Prince Bismarck had sought out Lord Odo Russell (English Ambassador in Berlin), and had announced to him that he wished to finish France off, that Russia would put no obstacles in the way, and that, together with that Power, he would divide Austria if the latter opposed him. This explains the prolonged and persistent emotion which we had noticed in the English official world. . . ." A certain section of the diplomatic world circulated the alarming news, which, permeating the world of business by underground channels, kept up a state of anxiety in people's minds, and, between the Powers, a state of irritation which may have had its advantages.

Bismarck and Prince Orloff.

As a matter of fact, Prince Bismarck was not harbouring such black designs. We may believe, on the whole, the confidences which he made to Prince Orloff, Russian Ambassador in Paris, in a conversation which he had with the latter towards the end of February 1874, and of which the Duc Decazes obtained a report a little later. "Prince Bismarck suddenly asked Prince Orloff, rather abruptly, what was being said of Germany in France and in Europe. 'Do you wish to know all that people say?' said his

interlocutor. On an affirmative answer from Prince Bismarck, Prince Orloff told him that people were very preoccupied, not only in Paris, but also in Vienna and in St. Petersburg, by the project of conquest harboured by Germany, which was credited with the intention of securing a great coast line, by absorbing Holland, Belgium, Picardy and Normandy, and of creating, with Burgundy and Franche Comté, a new kingdom, under German sovereignty, for the benefit of Prince Frederick Charles. Prince Bismarck repudiated the whole thing, protesting against any ideas of war and conquest, and asseverating that he had no intention of again invading France. Prince Orloff then asked whether those pacific wishes were absolute, insinuating that perhaps they might be modified if certain changes should take place in the French Government, or if the latter should succeed in its efforts to find new allies and to repair its military forces. Prince Bismarck's answer was, approximately, as follows :—'France can repair her army if she wishes it; it will take a long time, but she has a right to do it. She can attempt to secure allies, such as your country, for instance, we have no objection to make; in such an event, we should know how to maintain our military superiority and to modify our system of alliances. But there is one thing which we could not suffer, that is, that France should become clerical, that she should attempt to gather around her the elements of clericalism which exist in Germany and in all the countries of Europe. That would constitute a danger for us, for our very idea of the State.'

"Prince Orloff then asked Prince Bismarck whether he looked upon the present French Government as a clerical one. Prince Bismarck answered: 'Not absolutely, but, in a certain measure, sufficiently so to keep us attentive!' He added that what he liked in the Government of M.

Thiers—to whom he gave the highest praise—was that his was a modern Government, independent of clericalism." The story ends by this observation, a vivid picture of the Bismarck of that time :—"In that appreciation, as in all those which Prince Bismarck utters now-a-days, is to be found a passionate determination to look upon every question from the point of view of clericalism, which has become his exclusive and almost morbid preoccupation."

Such was indeed the case, and nothing sheds more light on international relations at that time than the knowledge of that attitude of mind in the German Chancellor. The Duc Decazes, thoroughly well informed, was perfectly well aware of the peril in which Bismarck's passionate and aggressive prejudice against tendencies which, on the whole, were those of Marshal MacMahon's Government, might, at any moment, place European peace. He even slightly exaggerated that peril; and this explains the constant state of anxious and vigilant apprehension in which the French Foreign Minister kept himself. He felt himself included in the hostile distrust which Prince Bismarck harboured against the members of the Right. The anti-ultramontane fury which mastered the Chancellor deprived him of any restraint or equity towards everything which seemed to him to be directly or indirectly connected with the "white policy" in Europe.

In his letter of the 9th March, 1874, already quoted, the Duc Decazes confounds, as they were confounded in reality, both subjects of anxiety. He touches on the prevailing question of the future Conclave, and expresses the wish that that Conclave may be an "independent one." "I hope it may be," he adds, "and people think it will. But the Cardinals must also think so before I am assured that they will give up

the fatal idea of leaving Rome. *It is my supreme desire.* If the Cardinals had the unfortunate idea of coming away and holding their meeting in France, I am convinced that M. de Bismarck would consider it a sufficient pretext and nothing would stop him." Those were the two nightmares, Rome and Germany, the Conclave and an invasion. Let us add, in order to omit nothing, that there was also a little wiliness in all this, and that the clever Gascon was not always taken in by the panics which he contrived to spread.

However, fear was the ruling sentiment. France was so ill armed, so little supported, political parties were so imprudent, the adverse campaign so adroitly managed!

The Kissingen Attempt.

The attempt on Prince Bismarck's life at Kissingen threw fresh fuel on the Chancellor's anger. A Magdeburg cooper fired at him on the 13th July, and wounded him in the forearm. Some time after that, Bismarck told the following story in the course of a speech at the Reichstag: "I went to see this man in his prison; when I found myself face to face with him, I said to him, 'You did not know me, why then did you want to kill me?' The man answered, 'Because of the ecclesiastical laws in Germany.' I then asked him whether he thought to improve matters in that way. He said, 'They are so bad that they could not be worse.' I am convinced that he got hold of that phrase in some Society. He also said, 'You have offended my party.' I said, 'Which is your party?' Whereupon he answered, before witnesses, 'The party of the Centre in the Reichstag.' Gentlemen, you may repudiate that man if you choose, but he is now clinging to your coat-tails."

In such a way were facts and doctrines linked in the mind of Prince Bismarck; we must therefore turn our eyes towards Rome.

There, Bismarck had to do with a very embarrassing

adversary. Pope Pius IX, with his abrupt good-nature and the complacence with which he played the part of a martyr, was the man best fitted to frustrate the wily or brutal calculations of the Chancellor. The latter did not know which way to turn. He invoked the law of guarantees from the Italian Government, who turned a deaf ear; he addressed circular letters concerning the future conclave to the different Powers, but nobody answered. He had the mortification of seeing that his very violence made all his adversaries draw nearer to each other: France, the Empress Augusta, the feudal party, Count d'Arnim, the Vicomte de Gontaut-Biron, and even Prince Gortschakoff, who watched the struggle and who derided those useless attacks against an old, defenceless man.

Bismarck and the Pope.

The good Pope took no less pleasure in exasperating the angry and powerless Hercules. On the 21st June, 1874, on the occasion of the twenty-eighth anniversary of his Pontificate, he had pronounced an address, which was specially aimed at the moderate men who sought for a compromise.

"We are advised in favour of a truce, a *modus vivendi*," he said. "Could such a project ever be carried to a satisfactory end with an adversary who continually holds in his hand a *modus nocendi*, a *modus auferendi*, a *modus destruendi*, and a *modus occidendi*?[1] Is it possible for the calm to form an alliance with the storm whilst the latter howls and rages, destroying and uprooting everything which it finds in its way? What then shall we do, Venerable Brothers, unto whom it has been said: *Statis in domo Dei et in atriis domus Dei nostri?* We will remain united with the Episcopate, which, in Germany, in Brazil and everywhere in the Catholic Church, gives luminous proofs of constancy and firmness."

[1] Means of harming, of confiscating, of destroying, of killing.

The Roman Question.

From all parts of the globe, pious crowds came to Rome to raise their hands towards the white figure which was to be seen at the Vatican windows. French pilgrims always were the most numerous, and French Bishops always in the front rank. Cardinal Guibert, Archbishop of Paris, published a violent letter against the Government of King Victor Emmanuel. At the "friendly" instance of the Italian Ambassador, the French Government, in a note published by the *Journal Officiel* of the 31st July, expressed "regret" for the publication of this letter. The Duc Decazes complained, in his intimate correspondence, of the attitude of "our inopportunists," as he wittily called them.

The Government was attacked from the Right and from the Left, obliged to face both sides at once, at the very time when, still in the same spirit of conciliation towards Foreign Powers, it thought it necessary to take another measure of greater gravity, and one which touched the Pope to the quick—the recall of the *Orénoque*.

That cruiser, stationed in the port of Civita Vecchia, had been held by M. Thiers' Government at the disposal of Pope Pius IX. Not only was the presence of that warship a safeguard, it also constituted a sort of tacit and permanent acknowledgment of the secular power. The port of Civita Vecchia, having now become a part of the Italian kingdom, the official position of the *Orénoque* was no longer in conformity with the rules of International Maritime Law. The Italian Government urgently demanded of the French Government that the *Orénoque* should be recalled. A German intervention, a *casus belli*, was spoken of.

Withdrawal of the *Orénoque*.

Cardinal de Bonnechose, Archbishop of Rouen, was at Rome. He had gone early to the Vatican (13th October) in order to be present at the Pope's walk. "Pius IX left his rooms

at a quarter to twelve. Cardinal Guidi, Cardinal de Bonnechose, Monsignor Hassoun, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and old Baron Visconti followed him. Pius IX seemed much aged and his features bore a look of sadness. He walked in silence and with some difficulty, leaning on a stick. . . . Suddenly he stopped, leaning both hands on his stick and raising his eyes towards the French Cardinal. 'Well, Cardinal,' said he, 'the *Orénoque* is called away!' The Pope then resumed his walk; then stopping again and shaking his stick: 'Yes, yes,' he went on, 'the *Orénoque* is recalled; M. de Corcelle, whom I saw this morning, brought me the news.' The walk ended, the Pope sat in the library. He said several times that he was growing old, and his white head shook on his breast. . . . The very same evening, the Pope saw the Cardinal again. He showed him the letter which Marshal MacMahon had written to him on the subject of the *Orénoque*, and read to him the answer which he had written: 'I did not ask for the *Orénoque*,' he said, 'let them withdraw it if they like; Civita Vecchia is a long way off; the *Orénoque* was twenty-four hours away from the Vatican, and its help would not have been worth much. But the humiliation of France is great and I grieve over it.' The Cardinal asked him what could be done. 'Nothing,' said he; 'when it is obvious that everything one could say would be useless, it is better to hold one's peace.'"[1]

The Duc Decazes, having been questioned on the subject on the 15th October, at the Permanent Committee, by M. de la Bouillerie, evaded the question by elusive words. The Duc de Broglie, mentioning the incident in his work on M. de Gontaut-Biron's mission, adds the following words: "Nothing equals the touching resignation with which Pope Pius IX saw, without a

[1] Mgr. Besson, *Vie du Cardinal Bonnechose*, vol. ii., p. 193, *et seq.*

word of reproach to France, the disappearance of that last sign of her powerless sympathy."

The grievance of the "white policy," so cleverly raised by Prince Bismarck against the Government of Marshal MacMahon, was to be the source of other troubles, and to occasion in another part of Europe, in Spain, another no less disagreeable intervention on the part of Germany.

Spanish Affairs.

Events in Spain have always been interesting to France, but, after the war of 1870, everything that took place beyond the Pyrenees became markedly so. Spain had, since 1868, remained in a state of civil war, a revolutionary crisis was taking place. The feeble Republic of Castelar had given place to the Dictatorship of Marshal Serrano. Again, the candidature of a Hohenzollern to the throne of Spain was spoken of, and the mission of Count Hatzfeldt to Madrid had seemed at least singular. In the north of the peninsula, the Carlists were fighting the troops of old Marshal Concha. The latter forced them to raise the siege of Bilbao, but, soon after that, on the 29th June, at Mura, near Estella, he was struck down on the outposts. The Carlists, taking advantage of the panic, routed his army and made 5,000 prisoners. Numberless excesses marked the renewed Carlist offensive. The Pretender published a proclamation in which he asserted his kingly rights, and spoke of the rest of the Spanish nation as rebels (16th July, 1874).

France was openly accused of favouring the Carlists, of facilitating the transit of weapons, and of allowing the Pretender's soldiers to come and go across the frontier. The Marquis de la Vega de Armijo, entrusted with a mission in Paris, handed to the Duc Decazes a somewhat haughty note, setting out his grievances and demanding guarantees. The Duc Decazes answered by a memorandum, in which he easily established the *bonâ*

fides of the French Government, and gave proof that the transit of weapons was the object of an active contraband, Spanish officials being instrumental in opening the door to rifles sent from England by sea. This sincere and convincing demonstration was not likely to satisfy a Government anxious to hide from itself its own responsibilities.

At the same time, Don Alfonso, brother of the Pretender, boldly marched to Cuença, a fortified city about seventy-five miles from Madrid. After a short siege, Cuença was taken, and devastated with fire and sword. The Republican Government answered by declaring Spain to be in a state of siege, and ordering the pursuit of Carlists.

A German intervention was spoken of, supporting the demands made by Spain on the French Government.

German Intervention.

On the 6th August, the German Government addressed to the five Great Powers a dispatch inviting them to recognise the Government of Marshal Serrano. But here Bismarck had reckoned without the complexity of European situations. Whilst England, Italy, Austria, and even France gave their assent to the proposition, Russia refused to acknowledge a Government which, in her eyes, bore a revolutionary character. This was an unexpected check to the Chancellor, who had to give some bitter explanations on the subject to the Reichstag. The whole incident confirmed in his mind that suspicion of a "white policy" which had become his perpetual nightmare.

At the same moment the Comte de Chambord proclaimed the unity of the House of Bourbon by a solemn adhesion to the manifesto of Don Carlos. The qualified Royalists who were in power in France found themselves cruelly embarrassed. At a sitting of the Permanent Committee (3rd September) M. de la Bouillerie questioned

the Government upon the acknowledgment of the Spanish Government. The Duc Decazes was not present; the Minister of the Interior answered that it was an accomplished fact which could not again be raised.

The French Government logically followed its action by sending an accredited Ambassador to the Government of Marshal Serrano; this was M. de Chaudordy, a personal friend of the Duc Decazes, who had played a part by Gambetta's side in the times of the National Defence.

The Marquis de la Vega de Armijo was, in return, accredited as an Ambassador to the Government of Marshal MacMahon. He preserved a somewhat cold attitude when handing in his credentials, on the 11th September, whilst Marshal Serrano, in Madrid, gave a singularly gracious welcome to the German Mission, Herr v. Ludolf, appointed Ambassador, and Count Hatzfeldt. "It is to me a source of deep and particular satisfaction to see the sanction, on this happy occasion, of that spontaneous accord, inspired in your Emperor by the highest motives, and afterwards supported by the powerful influence which Germany has acquired in Europe." This was indeed nestling under the wings of the Empire!

Did Germany intend to squeeze France within the grasp of a double hostility, on the Rhine and beyond the Pyrenees? The Marquis de la Vega de Armijo requested that the *Univers* be suspended, for having treated the Spanish Government with contumely. On the 4th October, the same Ambassador addressed another note to the Duc Decazes, accusing the frontier authorities of conniving with the Carlists, and casting doubts on the good-will of the Marshal's Government, and even upon the general policy of France. This note was sent at the same time to Berlin and to London; the German press

published extracts of it on the very day on which it was handed to the Duc Decazes. The latter concealed his very real emotion, answered the note in every point, and smothered the incident under the placidity of formalities.

He had now begun to breathe again, having had wind of a solution which was the best that France and the French Government could desire: the restoration of a Spanish Constitutional Monarchy was being prepared underhand, in favour of Alfonso, Prince of the Asturias, and son of Queen Isabella.

Alfonso's Pronunciamento.

On the 28th November the young Prince published his first manifesto, in which he declared himself "in virtue of the abdication of his august mother, who is as generous as she is unfortunate," the only representative of the Monarchical right in Spain. On the 29th December, Marshal Martinez Campos, followed by two battalions, pronounced in favour of Alfonso at Murviedo (Valentia). The armies of the Centre, that of the North, which, under Marshal Serrano himself, had again taken the field against the Carlists, the garrisons of Madrid and other large towns, all followed this example. After a purely formal resistance, the Government gave place to the Canovas del Castillo Cabinet, by whom the Prince was recalled. He at once left Paris, where he was staying with his mother and his uncle and aunt, the Duke and Duchess of Montpensier. The Duc Decazes had seen him and had been one of the first to congratulate him, contributing in a measure towards the restoration of a dynasty which was to close the Revolutionary era in Spain. He wrote to his friend, the Comte de Chaudordy, on that subject (9th January, 1875): "I have had several long conversations with His Majesty in his palace and at the Duke of Montpensier's, as well as with M. Elduayen. . . . We can keep careful

guard over the frontier, and we will not fail to do so. I said this to the young Prince, adding that I begged him to trust me and to take no notice of what people might say. . . . The young King leaves excellent impressions here and takes with him a grateful recollection of France. And . . . now, may God keep him and guide him in the difficult task which is laid upon him."[1] On the whole, this was a happy solution, and one which removed from the Duc Decazes a grave source of preoccupations.

Gortschakoff and Bismarck.

The Minister's attention was at the same time engaged in watching certain movements which were taking place in European Cabinets, and which seemed to indicate a desire to escape from the Bismarckian tyranny.

Frankly, they had had enough of it. The manners of the great man were too abrupt, his successes too frequent, too startling and too much boasted of. Mean feelings are not absent from exalted spheres; professional jealousy belongs to all professions, even to those which claim to lead mankind.

A first symptom of that feeling had been the refusal of Russia to join in the acknowledgment of the Spanish Government. Bismarck, who had had no little trouble in persuading the Emperor William to initiate the acknowledgment, had understood the snub. In his mind, grievances against Gortschakoff were accumulating, and Gortschakoff, on his side, was making a list of the wrongs Bismarck had done him.

Gortschakoff felt himself ageing without having accomplished the great work dreamed of by his uneasy genius. He one day said to Bismarck himself: "I will not flare out like a lamp which is going out—I must set like a sun in the western sky."

[1] Unpublished private document.

The "other Chancellor" was not the only man in Russia whose eyes were offended by the growing splendour of the Bismarckian star. The Old-Russian party in general, and, at Court, the *entourage* of the Czarewitch, made no secret of similar sentiments. The German Chancellor was there again met by the subtle and persistent opposition which he ascribed to the influence of "Englishwomen."[1]

A friend wrote from St. Petersburg to the Duc Decazes: "A small anti-Prussian group, very obviously aggressive, has been formed, especially at the Anitchkof Palace, the residence of the Czarewitch. It is composed of the Czarewitch himself, the Czarevna, and the Princess of Wales, who are most eager; then of the Crown Prince of Denmark and a few others, with the Grand Duchess of Leuchtenberg, and, I do not quite know why, the Grand Duchess Constantine, a German Princess."

More or less authentic anecdotes circulated, augmented by Court gossip. "This was at a supper-party, on the day when the report of Herr Teutsch's speech in the Reichstag[2] had reached St. Petersburg. The Grand Duchess Marie, addressing Prince v. Reuss, the German Ambassador, said to him: 'Ambassador, I drink the health of the Emperor William, as he is my uncle, and, at the same time, I drink to Alsace-Lorraine.' A moment later, Prince v. Reuss not having said a word, the Grand Duchess raised her glass full of champagne, and said a second time: 'Ladies and gentlemen, I drink to the return to France of Alsace and of Lorraine.' The Ambassador remained impassive, but, as soon as the company rose from the table, he took his hat and disappeared."

[1] See M. Busch's *Memoirs of Bismarck*, vol. ii.

[2] See vol. ii., p. 430.

These were but sallies. The faithful friendship of the Czar Alexander for the Emperor William gave Bismarck a feeling of security. However, he had begun to notice that Gortschakoff laid his hand on the private correspondence of the uncle and nephew. Russia was obviously becoming more independent and exacting.

The eternal Eastern question was evolving towards a new crisis. Austria, pushed back by Germany along the Danube, was weighing down Christian nationalities. Servia was endeavouring to work out a constitutional form and a future under the restored authority of the Obrenowitch. Roumania was still under the nominal sovereignty of the Sultan, but she had just opened a very grave international question by claiming the right of treating directly with foreign Powers in commercial matters, thus attacking the very basis of Eastern peace, the Treaty of Paris (1856).

The Powers supported the demands of Roumania, in spite of the clamours of the Sublime Porte and the secret resistance of Austria. Christian populations were agitating and demanding reforms in every part of the Ottoman Empire. In Bulgaria and in Montenegro, grave events were in preparation; revolts, with their consequences, unavoidable in Turkey—viz: sanguinary and inhuman repression—were bursting out in several places.

Eastern Affairs:

European Cabinets, fearing complications which might touch them in their turn, counselled calm and prudence. Russia and Austria-Hungary mutually declared their intention of respecting the *status quo*. But, already on the 18th April, the Duc Decazes made a remark which was as true as it was witty: "Count Andrassy declares that he and Russia wish to maintain the *status quo* in the East; well and good, but let us be clear as to the meaning of words. Is not the *status quo* in the East the condition

of a sick man? And are we to defend him against cure as well as against death?"

It was natural enough that Russia should seek to take precautions in view of events which were easily foreseen; and it was equally natural that the French Government, listening to the wind, should slowly turn towards the more reassuring projects which seemed to be opening. Acts of courtesy were exchanged. The Empress of Russia arrived in Paris on the 24th November; she stayed there until the 30th, on her way to San Remo. The Marshal received the Czarewitch and the Grand Duke who had accompanied their mother, and himself called on the Empress at the Russian Embassy. On the 28th a dinner-party was given at the Elysée in honour of the young princes.

Following on these attentions, the Czar sent to the Marshal, through his Ambassador, the ribbon of Saint Andrew, accompanied by an autograph letter (15th December). On the other hand, the French Government conferred on the Ambassador, Prince Orloff, the Grand Cordon of the Legion of Honour, an exceptional favour.

Dawn of the Franco-Russian Alliance.

Those signs did not escape observation, and were noticed by *The Times* in a leading article; the very few who were in the secret knew that a certain Franco-Russian policy was being sketched out, at least within the limits of private conversations.

On the 4th December, the Duc Decazes received, at the Quai d'Orsay, a visit from Count Schouvaloff, the recently-appointed Russian Ambassador in London, who had accompanied the Empress to Paris. The conversation bore chiefly on internal French politics. Count Schouvaloff, speaking in the name of the Czar, declared himself a convinced Septennalist, at any rate very hostile

to an Imperial Restoration, and to the proclamation of a Republic. He then spoke of European matters:

"I wanted to tell you that one thing has much struck me since I arrived in England; I have written about it to the Czar. I, the Ambassador of Russia, do not talk with Lord Derby of the affairs of Russia, but of those of Germany and France; it is the almost exclusive preoccupation of the English Cabinet, which dreads a rupture between those two countries. I am very conscientiously endeavouring to reassure the Minister. The Czar writes that I am perfectly right, and I have renewed my efforts.

"Let me repeat it: I have, for many years, lived in great intimacy with my master (Count Schouvaloff was Minister of Police before being Ambassador in London); every summer, I have accompanied him in his visits and excursions; with him I have spent weeks in the intimate society of the Emperor William, of the German Princes and of Prince Bismarck, and I can tell you in all sincerity and with full knowledge of the case, that they do not want war with France. . . . They could not think of it. Our army is equal to theirs. They are not sure of us, nor of Austria, and that is why they are so attentive to us.

"Before 1870, they might have hoped to find in Europe allies or supporters against us in case of war; now, they can no longer entertain that hope. If you could only dispose of 800,000 men, they would have to leave an army of 400,000 men at least behind their fortifications, and the game against us would be unequal.

"No, you need fear nothing from them, unless you furnish their animosity with a pretext. . . ."[1]

Thus spoke Count Schouvaloff. Though his declarations were unofficial, they were sufficiently precise to inspire hope, if not confidence. The watchful and

[1] Unpublished private document.

cautious Duc Decazes noted them down and kept them in reserve, without, however, entirely counting upon them.

His attention remained turned towards Prince Bismarck. At the moment when he entertained Count Schouvaloff, nothing seemed to indicate the least relaxation on the part of Germany. Wherever French interests were concerned, notably in Constantinople, French diplomacy found itself faced by persevering and open opposition from Germany.

The speech from the Throne at the opening of the Reichstag, delivered on the 29th October, had been a haughty justification of "an armed force, necessary in time of peace," and a pressing demand for further military supplies. "I know," said the Emperor, "that on the day when those hostile sentiments become translated into actions, the whole nation and its princes are ready, to join with me in defending the honour and the rights of the Empire."

German Threats.

These words, in which sounded an accent of the famous *furor teutonicus*, caused a sensation. "Defiant words" the *Standard* called them. "The end of the speech is a threat," added the *Fremdenblatt*. Since then repetition had brought familiarity, but, with the Duc Decazes, familiarity did not breed contempt.

England.

And yet some comfort came to him from England. He had sent to London as an Ambassador an old friend of his, the Comte de Jarnac, who had business and family relations in the United Kingdom, and who was warmly welcomed by the Court.

The Disraeli Cabinet, with Lord Derby as Foreign Secretary, made a great show of independence with regard to the Bismarckian policy, and the Premier let pass no opportunity of asserting the vigour of the foreign policy of England.

At the Lord Mayor's banquet (9th November, 1874), where M. de Jarnac was present, Disraeli spoke of France with the greatest consideration; he was the first man in Europe who publicly denied the theory of French decadence. "Without entering into further details," said he, "I can but express my astonishment and my admiration for the nerve and elasticity thanks to which France has come out of apparently inextricable difficulties and unprecedented disasters, as well as my sympathy for the magnanimity and prudence of her present rulers." These words had a marked anti-Bismarckian flavour. It gave great pleasure to the Duc Decazes to read them. He wrote to M. de Jarnac (11th November, 1874): "The expressions of the Prime Minister are the most favourable that have been uttered for five years about our poor France and her Government; they will go round the world, leaving everywhere a beneficent impression. . . ."[1]

The French Premier was also grateful to Queen Victoria for her reputed frequent personal appeals to the Emperor William when the German Chancellor was carried away by his anti-French and anti-clerical feelings, and he welcomed any counsel or confidence which reached him from that quarter, either directly or indirectly.

Nevertheless, on an exceptionally important question, the London Cabinet was slowly preparing for French policy a blow which it would take a long time to get over. The question concerned Egypt and the Suez Canal; it was one of the first occasions in which Disraeli's theory of a British Empire saw the light.

England and the Suez Canal.

England had offered a lively and persistent opposition to the piercing of the Isthmus, and to the plans of M. de Lesseps. Lord Palmerston's violent language in the House on the 7th July, 1856, concerning M. de Lesseps' private character is

[1] Unpublished private document.

not likely to be forgotten. This opposition had continued until the success of the work became assured, when the attitude changed. Lord Clarendon wrote to M. de Lesseps a letter, in which he endeavoured to justify the previous objections of England, by urging "obstacles which were due either to material conditions or to a social state in which such enterprises were unknown," and, on the whole, offering frank and handsome congratulations.

England had only resisted so long because she feared, in one of her statesmen's own words, "that, by means of that Canal, France might be able to send a fleet into Eastern waters within five weeks, whilst England would require ten to do the same thing. In case of war," added Lord Ellenborough (6th May, 1861), "the holders of the Canal might cut off communications between England and India, so that Egypt would cease to be neutral."

The whole problem was stated in those words. Now that the Canal was built, it was naturally the possession of it and the neutrality of Egypt which monopolised the anxious thoughts of the English Cabinet.

The solemn inauguration of the Suez Canal on the 17th November, 1869, under the auspices of the Empress Eugénie, had been the climax of Napoleonic glory. Soon afterwards, defeats, internal perturbations, and the weakening of France, had allowed the London Cabinet to combine in cold blood the elements of a new and very complex situation.

Other circumstances were no less favourable. Delays and material obstacles, resulting from the obstinate opposition of England, had brought the Company within an ace of ruin. During the year 1872, finding itself obliged to remunerate a capital which was twice what had been foreseen, the Company owed 15,000,000 francs

to its bondholders, and no longer paid its coupons; having tried to negotiate a loan of 20,000,000 at 10 per cent., only 5,000,000 were forthcoming.

Other very grave difficulties arose: a technical question, that of the tonnage of ships going through the Canal, occasioned urgent demands on the part of naval Powers. A Conference called together at Constantinople pronounced against the method of gauging imposed by M. de Lesseps for the calculation of transit dues, and the latter, threatened with a seizure of the Canal by Ottoman forces, was obliged to give in.

Egyptian Finance.

Finally, the political and financial position of Egypt, owing to the prodigalities of the Khedive Ismail, was becoming more and more precarious every day. One loan succeeded another, Egyptian paper was fetching nominal prices; both the public funds and the Prince's private fortune were engaged.

All these facts put together were singularly favourable to an acquisitive policy on the part of England.

On the 5th June, 1874, Lord Dunsany questioned the Cabinet on the subject of neutrality, and incidentally alluded to the possibility of buying a number of Canal shares, which the financial penury of the Khedive and of the Company might at any moment throw on the market. Lord Derby, in his answer, began by acknowledging that, contrarily to what had been expected in England, the cutting of the Isthmus had been profitable to the whole of Europe, and particularly to British commerce and administration. He announced the settlement of the tonnage question by M. de Lesseps' surrender, and, as to the possibility of acquiring considerable shares of the Canal, the Foreign Secretary expressed himself thus: "My answer is, in the first place, that it is unnecessary to talk of acquiring property which is not yet in the market. . . . No such offer has been made

to us. I hope, however, that my honourable friend will not ask me to express an abstract opinion on a transaction of that kind, for, when an individual wishes to buy a house, a property, or anything else, if he is a sensible man, he does not begin by telling the seller that the possession of it is indispensable to him. If a proposition for transferring the Canal to an International Commission were formulated, in such a way that all Governments should participate in the advantages of the Canal under equal terms, I do not say that such a frank proposition might not be welcome. But it has not been made, and I have no reason to think that it will be."

Those were public utterances. It cannot be denied that those Cabinets who were interested were warned. At any rate, the Duc Decazes knew how the matter stood, for he himself wrote, as early as the 6th May, 1874: "The question is to know whether Austria will join in the project of England, which is talking very loudly of the *expropriation of the Canal by means of redemption*, in order to place the high road to India under the almost exclusive influence of England. Lord Derby has spoken of it to Bisaccia with a frankness and sincerity which simplify the matter."[1]

The question was "simplified" in this sense that the projects of England were well known.

The French man in the street was beginning to anticipate the complications which might occur. On the 16th July, 1874, M. Pascal Duprat addressed a question to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the position created for French subjects in Egypt by recent taxes levied on foreigners. The Duc Decazes answered that he had opened negotiations with other Powers interested in the matter.

[1] Unpublished private document.

Reforms. In fact, negotiations had been going on during the whole vacation. A Convention signed on the 25th September, 1874, sanctioned the reform of Egyptian tribunals and the constitution of mixed tribunals. This Convention was to take effect from the 1st January, 1876. It was incontestably the first step towards an internationalisation of Egypt, and the substitution of a collective authority for the hitherto preponderating French influence. This was sanctioned after a long opposition on the part of France, in spite of her, and on the whole, against her.

On the 16th December, the National Assembly discussed the Report of M. de Plœuc concerning the position of French subjects in Egypt. The Duc Decazes was unwell on the day when the discussion took place. On the 18th he gave a few explanations and promised a Yellow Book. Gambetta interrupted him again and again, and it was about that time that he apostrophised the Minister thus: "Your foreign policy is no better than your home policy, as I will prove to you." On the 18th July, 1874, the Duc Decazes laid before the National Assembly a Bill ratifying the treaty concluded at Saigon between France and the kingdom of Annam. This was the famous Philastre treaty, the

Tonquin. ambiguities of which were to give birth to the "Tonquin Affair."

A young Deputy of the Extreme Left, M. Georges Périn, became, already then, conscious of the new orientation which this action, however timorous and tentative, gave to French policy abroad. It was a colonial policy, a world-policy which now opened before a country hardly recovering from catastrophes which had struck down its European and Continental authority.

M. Georges Périn pointed to the bonds which united

this new policy with the traditions of expansion and of Catholic protectorates in the East; he alluded to the missionary spirit. "That ardour which impels missionaries, and which has sometimes carried the whole country in their steps, is by no means a crime. On the contrary, I see in it a proof of their sincerity. . . . But I beg you not to ratify a treaty which contains clauses likely to become a source of incessant operations . . . and which, in order to put an end to these expeditions, will compel us to do, for the kingdom of Hué and Tonquin, what we did in 1767 for the provinces of Low Cochin China."

This was prophetic. But a great nation cannot escape from its traditions, neither elude the duty included in its destiny. . . . The obscure world of distant regions was now coming of its own accord to solicit the attention, and, so to speak, to knock at the doors of Europe.

In 1874, Marshal MacMahon received a visit from a Burmese Embassy, having at its head Ken Won Mengi, Foreign Minister in Burmah.

During the summer of that same year, war seemed imminent between China and Japan, *à propos* of the sovereignty of the island of Formosa. At the last moment, China gave way before the firm attitude of Japan (Treaty of the 20th October, 1874).

China and Japan.

Russia and the United States intervened both at the origin and the conclusion of the conflict; these two Powers seemed favourable towards Japan, with whom Russia was at that time negotiating the cession of Sakhalien.

Atchin War.

Holland was engaged in the long Atchin campaign against the Sultan Aladin-Mahmoud Shah (fall of Kraton, 24th January, 1874; General Van Swieten's triumphal return, 10th September, 1874).

Gordon in the Soudan.

Gordon was appointed Governor-General of the Soudan, in the place of Sir Samuel Baker (February, 1874). He had hardly settled down in Khartoum before he claimed for the Khedive the monopoly of ivory in the Equatorial Soudan, and began his half commercial, half warlike enterprises against the great chiefs of those regions (Suleiman, the son of Zobeir, defeated on the 4th September, 1874).

Fiji.

Great Britain took possession of the Fiji Islands, the richest archipelago in Polynesia, not far from New Caledonia and the Samoa Islands, thus completing the line of British possessions between Australia and America (20th September to 10th October, 1874).

The United States.

In the United States, certain Imperialistic tendencies began to be manifested. President Grant said, in his Message of December 1874, with reference to Cuba, that "the insurrection having lasted for six years, and Spain seeming incapable of putting an end to it, the intervention of the Powers had become indispensable." In the instructions given to Mr. Cushing when he was sent to Spain, Mr. Fish, the Foreign Secretary, had already declared that Cuba, "like the ancient Spanish colonies in America, should belong to the great family of American Republics, and that the President looked upon the independence of the island and the emancipation of slaves as the only certain and even possible solution of the Cuban question."

But an important modification was about to take place in the Government of the United States. The Republican party, which had been at the head of affairs since 1862, and which had still secured a majority of one hundred in the House of Representatives at the time of the last elections, was beaten on the 3rd

November, 1874, by the Democrats, who, in their turn, obtained a majority of seventy. In the Senate, the Republican majority was reduced from twenty-seven to seven. Owing to the natural working of American institutions, President Grant, who was only to give up the power two years later, had to rule over a Parliament which was opposed to him.

If the ever-present thought of the consequences of the war of 1870 strengthened in many nations a patriotic feeling and the need of an active foreign policy and imposing military forces, that same memory and those very same apprehensions increased the activities of those men who had undertaken the work of pacification.

Arbitration.

On the 8th July, 1873, the House of Commons, on the proposal of Mr. Henry Richard, had carried a resolution in favour of having recourse to international arbitration, in order to avoid as much as possible armed conflicts between the Powers. Mr. Henry Richard, strengthened by his success, immediately started on an active propaganda in favour of his doctrines, notably in Italy, in Holland,[1] and in the United States. On his return from Italy, he was entertained in Paris at a banquet organised by the Society of the Friends of Peace, and M. Frédéric Passy proposed a toast in his honour.

About the same time the Society for the Improvement of the Condition of Prisoners of War, of which the Comte d'Houdetot was President, had invited the Powers to send delegates to a Conference which was to open in Paris on the 18th May, 1874, in order to fix the principles of international regulations concerning the relations of armies and populations in time of war.

In answer to this invitation, Prince Gortschakoff

[1] On the 27th November, 1874, the Second Chamber of the Netherlands voted a resolution in favour of international arbitration.

declared that the Czar had conceived a similar design, and would shortly submit to the Powers a plan drawn on more general lines. On the 17th April, 1874, a Russian Imperial circular begged the Powers to send delegates to a Conference in Brussels. On the 27th July he proposed a programme entitled "Project of an International Convention concerning the laws and customs of war."

Surprise was the first impression produced. But it soon became known that the Czar Alexander had personally taken the project to heart. Then, in some Cabinets, a certain distrust followed surprise; the English Government, in particular, preserved a frigid silence.

The Duc Decazes wrote familiarly to one of the Ambassadors: "Are you going to send some illustrious soldier or heavy swell to Brussels? The Czar is so set upon his project that we have not been able to refuse to attend. But I am not quite satisfied in my mind about these Imperial imaginations, and, reading the programme in question, it seems to me very like a sanction or consecration of the Prussian proceedings during the last war."

In fact, these fears were unfounded; they came from an excess of "diplomatic prudence."

The Conference held its first meeting on the 27th July at the Foreign Office in Brussels, under the presidency of M. d'Aspremont-Lynden, who soon gave up the chair to the Russian delegate, Baron de Jomini. Baron Baude and General Arnaudeau represented the French Government. The Conference appointed a Commission to work out a project on the Russian basis.

The delegates of the weaker Powers, and, in particular, Baron de Lambermont, Belgian delegate, announced that in no case could they assent to "clauses tending to

weaken national defence and to free citizens from their duties towards their country." The Commission adopted without difficulty the proposition sanctioning the interdiction of poisoned weapons, of explosive missiles, and the prohibition of poisoning wells and fountains, of killing defenceless foes, etc., etc. On the question of bombarding fortified towns, the German representative, General Voight-Rhetz, declared that bombardment was one of the most efficacious means of attaining the object of the war. However, certain rules protecting non-belligerent populations, ambulances, and public edifices were adopted.

The following paragraph relating to espionage was adopted: "An individual who, clandestinely or under false pretences, gathers or attempts to gather information in the localities occupied by the enemy, with the intention of communicating with the adverse party, cannot be considered as a spy. A spy caught in the act shall be dealt with according to the laws and regulations in use in the army which shall have seized him."

Opinions were equally divided on the grave question of neutralising ambulances. Germany opposed this. According to her delegates, ambulances might be taken and used for the wounded of the capturing Power. The Commission could not agree on this, and it had to be referred to the Governments.

Another disagreement occurred as to the occupation of invaded provinces. Was such occupation to be entirely "effective," so as to suspend the authority of the legal power? The analogy with a blockade at sea was striking. Again Germany opposed this wording.

The question of free, improvised corps was one of those which the Commission discussed in the most impassioned manner. Finally, the clause was worded as follows: "Volunteers may claim the rights of belligerents

in the following cases: (1) if they have at their head a person responsible for his subordinates; (2) if they bear a certain external distinctive sign, recognisable at a distance; (3) if they carry arms openly; (4) if, in their operations, they conform to the laws, customs, and proceedings of war."

The recommendations of the Commission were read and approved by the Conference at a general meeting. They were afterwards to be submitted to the Governments. But the matter never was concluded. The Conference had laid down principles in favour of the improvement of the customs of war which on the whole became adopted and enforced by public opinion. But, owing to the opposition of England, they received no final, official sanction.

Whilst these great discussions were taking place in Brussels, others were opening in Vienna. On the 1st August, 1874, an International Sanitary Conference met, destined to preserve Europe against the invasions of great Asiatic epidemics. It applied a rigorous quarantine in the ports of the Red Sea and the Caspian Sea; but it was powerless to abolish the system of quarantines between the various European Powers; it established a system of prophylactic protection against yellow fever.

Finally, a Postal Congress of all European States and of the United States of America met at Berne in September 1874, and decided that a Universal Postal Union should be created (Treaty of the 9th November, 1874). By the terms of this arrangement, all the States of Europe, Egypt, the United States, and all the Powers who acquiesced, form, from the postal point of view, one and the same territory, within which all correspondence is submitted to a tariff as uniform as possible, each Power preserving its freedom of action for internal tariffs only.

31474

All these various efforts, by throwing down the barriers which divide nations, attenuated distinctions and antagonisms, and began to outline certain features, still very indistinct, of that great collective entity which is Humanity.

France and Europe.

France had the greatest interest in the reconstitution of a concert in which she resumed her place. The Duc Decazes understood this; but, as is too often the case, the external policy of France suffered from the counter effect of her internal policy. Everywhere, abroad, the prospects of the Government which he represented were being discussed, a fact which was not calculated to add to its authority. Ambassadors did not hesitate to confide to him their Legitimist or Bonapartist sentiments; the most agreeable declared themselves to be "Septennalists." For foreigners assume the privilege of taking sides, not without some vehemence, in the internal quarrels of France; it may be flattering to the country, but it certainly is frequently embarrassing to its Government. The more he thought about the difficulties of his situation, the more the Duc Decazes was brought back to that clerical question which was so intimately bound up with the future of the party to which he belonged. A private letter written by him towards the end of the year (22nd December) contains some very true observations on the general situation: "I said long ago that the Papacy and Italy might one day become reconciled through us and against us. . . . Bismarck is mortal, like all of us. There are some interests which will survive him and which, after his death, one would regret having compromised. If he had fought the church for a spiritual idea, he would leave behind him the work of an apostle, but this struggle between a penal code and religious thought, how in truth could it survive the man who, in order to favour it, makes use of the strength

given him by a brutal incident? . . . Ah! if only France were sure of to-morrow, I should feel sure for her of the rest of the future!"[1] What indeed was the morrow to bring to France? The blind and impetuous ardour of political parties did not allow of an answer to that question.

This was the moment when the trial of Count d'Arnim[2] added yet more to the vexations which the Government had to bear, by parading the brutal rigour with which Prince Bismarck treated France. He had even permitted the publication of documents which were objectionable to other Powers, and particularly to Russia. Nothing was allowed to stand in his way.

In another letter, the Duc Decazes examined the position which resulted from that audacious publication of the Arnim papers: all the most exalted personalities in Europe were involved; confidences and secrets were brought to light. "It must be admitted that, under such conditions, diplomatic relations will become difficult, and you and I may well ask ourselves how far the agents with whom we correspond are justified in publishing our words after having altered them. . . . But we are forced to allow the Chancellor such liberties that I do not think we need grudge him this one, especially as it will harm him more than any one else."[3]

However, as will be seen by his last phrase, the Duc Decazes made use of those incidents for his own purposes, but without raising his head or showing his hand. He wrote to General Le Flô in December 1874: "You told me, my dear General, that public opinion in Russia is not at this moment favourable to Germany, that 'the

[1] Unpublished private document.

[2] Count Harry d'Arnim, formerly German Ambassador in Paris, was accused of having abstracted State Papers from the archives of the Paris Embassy, and sentenced to three months' imprisonment.

[3] Unpublished private document.

wind is not blowing in that direction'; but you remind me that it is prudent only to found very discreet hopes on such an unstable basis. I agree with you on both points, entirely, and I only dwell on the improvement in the situation to say, in conclusion, that we must use great care in maintaining and developing it, in view of a possible, though uncertain, future. . . . We shall have to tackle great questions when Parliament meets again, without knowing on what or on whom we may depend. The first battle will be in favour of priority for the Senate Bill. Victory, without being decisive, would have some importance; defeat might mean a complete rout, if we do not find some means of warding that off. I am much concerned about all this. If our poor country could be wise and calm at home, do you not agree, dear friend, that we might predict for it something like a future abroad?"

The Minister allowed the anxieties which troubled his mind to transpire when he had occasion to speak in public and to utter a warning note. On the 24th October, 1874, speaking to the Chamber of Commerce of Bordeaux, he said: "Our foreign policy rests solely and absolutely upon the rigorous and scrupulous accomplishment of the treaties which bind us to other Powers. Certainly—and you will not blame my caution—I will not *now* attempt to provoke or to pursue any modification in those conventions which have been left to us by the past; I claim their strict observance, and I, on my part, observe them loyally. . . ." The whole protest lay in that timid *now*.

A last word to illustrate that ever present anguish, lightened by a vacillating ray of hope in the midst of troubled, ungrateful times, is to be found in that precious correspondence with an intimate friend: "In reality, such a life is only bearable on condition that a little hope

is preserved. . . . The Marshal is most kind to me. . . . We both do our duty, however sadly. Indeed, no one can expect more from us."[1]

III

The country itself cared little for the worries of the Government, and was full of confidence and prosperity.

In Paris, public life resumed the grace and *éclat* which it had shown during the latter years of the Second Empire. The exhibition of works of art, organised in the Palace of the Corps Législatif in aid of the Alsaciens-Lorrains, had revealed some of the treasures preserved in private collections, such as the Rothan, Double, Duchâtel and Galliera collections, and, in particular, the Poussins of the Duc d'Aumale. French taste was beginning to regain consciousness of itself.

The Salon of 1874 had been particularly rich in masterpieces; Corot, Henner, Bastien-Lepage, Carolus-Duran triumphed. Manet exhibited "Le Bon Bock," Gérôme obtained a medal for one of his most popular works, "L'Éminence Grise." All Paris went to see Paul Baudry's frescoes for the decoration of the Opera, which were exhibited in the Palace of the School of Fine Arts. The Opera itself was almost finished and about to be opened on the occasion of the Lord Mayor's visit to Paris.

Revival.

Foreign Royalties, the King of Bavaria, Prince Milan, the Empress of Russia, the Russian Grand Dukes were once more on the road to Paris. Great hunting parties were arranged at Chantilly and Eschimont in honour of the Prince of Wales. The theatres were making enormous runs with *La Fille de Madame Angot*, *Giroflé-Girofla*, *La Tour du Monde en*

[1] Unpublished private document.

80 *jours*, and Sardou's *La Haine*. There was a general feeling of revival.

The races, which now took place on the Auteuil course instead of that of La Marche, attracted enormous crowds. The English horse *Trent* won the Paris Grand Prix, whilst the Ascot winner was a French horse, *Boïard*.

Crowds gathered at the Neuilly fair. Paris presented a new aspect with great spaces opened by already forgotten fires, and the light pouring into the Louvre gardens, where the Tuileries Palace had stood. People had grown accustomed to the sight of ruins and called them picturesque.

Fashions were quiet in colour, as becomes freshly-doffed mourning, but so marked in form as to be almost comical. Men wore tight-fitting trousers and short-tailed coats, their pointed, flat-brimmed silk hats jauntily set over one ear. Women were beginning to dye or to bleach[1] their high "chignons," crowned by Tyrolese hats, sharply tilted; their bare throats showing between the edges of a turn-down collar, their short-waisted figures well defined by tight-fitting, jet-spangled cuirasses, and their much-befrilled skirts bunched up behind by the new appendage called in English a "bustle," which seemed like a timid return to the crinoline.

All this society certainly looked rather fast. But times had changed, prosperity had returned; people gambled, speculated; good harvests put money into many purses. Clubs were being reopened, people "dined"

[1] "All dark-haired Parisiennes are now anxious to become 'blondes,' and all are working, not without some success, towards that end. . . . Dr. Tardieu, having visited a potassium factory, was struck by the colour of the workmen's hair. It was the true *flaming Venetian red*. This being mentioned in Paris before a circle of women, trials have been made, and potassium has now made its official appearance in a Parisian toilet. . . ."—*Journal of the de Goncourt*, vol. v., p. 126.

once more. Wit became the fashion again; Bazaine's escape occasioned much laughter. Victor Hugo's verses were parodied. The *Figaro* was a great success, and Rochefort relit his *Lanterne*. *Orphée aux Enfers* drew larger audiences. Young men went by, perched on very high velocipedes. . . .

For the very reason that the *régime* was felt to be precarious—seven years to be its maximum term of duration—people lived from day to day. Frenchmen have ever been like summer flies, whirling again in the sunshine as soon as the swallow has passed.

Marshal MacMahon presided with smiling kindliness over all this gaiety, and many popular jokes were, rightly or wrongly, attributed to him.

The Marshal's Travels.

In order to give a more distinct idea of the governing system to the rural populations, it had been decided that the President should travel. He lent himself to everything with his usual good grace; as a soldier, he had gone through many parades. He visited the West in August, and the North in September.

The Marshal did not pretend to play the Sovereign; he was simply a high official on a tour. Every one could speak to him and express personal opinions with a scarcely attenuated frankness.

The Chairman of the Tribunal of Commerce of St. Malo said to him that "the slackening of business was due to the uncertainty of the future and to ill-defined political conditions." On the other hand, Mgr. Freppel, at Angers, advised him to take in hand the defence of the temporal power. At St. Quentin, M. Hurstel urged him to "be our Washington," whilst M. Henri Martel wished him to "let the Presidency of the Republic become consolidated in his hands."

The Marshal listened in silence, biting his moustache:

now and then, it seemed to him that people went too far, and he spoke out angrily. As a rule, he let himself be carried away by the affectionate respect towards his person which was visible through it all. He told M. Testelin and the deputies of the Nord that he "meant to gather to himself moderate men of all parties," words which augured well for the future (11th September, 1874).

It was difficult to show any resentment towards populations who seemed so sure of their own feelings that they were content with patiently making use of their votes. The Cabinet trembled before every electoral manifestation and postponed all bye-elections as long as possible, knowing that they would turn against the Government.

Bye-Elections.

The Parliamentary recess had been marked by a long series of defeats. M. Godissart, a Republican, had been elected unopposed at La Martinique (9th August). Lists having been revised between the 10th and 29th August, according to the law of the 7th July, 1874, some slight hopes had been entertained by the Government, but only to meet with disappointment. In Calvados (16th August), a Bonapartist, M. Le Provost de Launay, was elected; in Maine-et-Loire (13th September), M. Maillé, a Republican, beat M. Bruas, a Septennalist.—In the Alpes-Maritimes, the Government, in order to protest against a Separatist sham manœuvre, was obliged to support two Republicans, MM. Médecin and Chiris. Worse still, in Seine-et-Oise, a friend of M. Thiers, M. Sénard, beat the Duc de Padoue, who had been imprudent enough to emphasise his personal relations with Marshal MacMahon. Meagre compensation was afforded by the success of an uncertain candidate, M. Delisse-Engrand in the Pas-de-Calais; and, on the eve of the meeting of the Assembly (8th November), Opposition victories began again with the success of

M. Madier de Montjau (Drôme), a convinced, thundering, Radical orator; of M. Parsy (Nord), a Radical, and of the Duc de Mouchy (Oise), a declared Bonapartist, and consequently a declared adversary of the ideas represented by the Government.

Departmental Elections.

A more general, and therefore more important defeat, occurred in connection with the partial re-elections of General Councils, which took place on the 4th October. Out of 1,426 councillors elected, 666 were Republicans, 604 Monarchists, and 156 Bonapartists, making a total loss of 40 seats for the Bonapartists. After their reconstitution, 43 General Councils elected Republican Chairmen.

Local Elections.

A decree of the 5th November had fixed for the 22nd of the same month the re-elections of the Municipal Councils. Most of the Republican mayors and *adjoints* were elected, whilst the mayors nominated by MM. de Broglie and de Fourtou were left out. Troyes, Clermont-Ferrand, Tours, Amiens, Nantes, Bar-le-Duc, Le Havre, Épinal, Bayonne, Arras, etc., excluded Septennalist municipalities. Marseilles elected a Socialist majority. In Paris, where the elections had been deferred until the 29th November, Republicans of various shades mustered 70 votes, the Monarchist or Conservative party only 10.

Under such auspices was the Assembly to resume its sittings on the 30th November, 1874. Neither M. de Fourtou nor M. de Broglie had found means of "setting the country to work."

The Sittings resumed.

The holidays were now ended, and the political question remained the same. The fear of Bonapartism, however, had grown still more. No *rapprochement* had taken place between the two sections of the Royalist party; on the contrary, they grew more and more excited against each other, as if they wished

to carry defiance to the utmost limit, and as if each secretly hoped that the fear of a greater evil would cause the other to capitulate at the last moment.

The Government hesitated before tackling the decisive debate, that on constitutional laws; the opening session being such a short one, it was agreed to defer the discussion until January 1875.

And yet swords were crossed once more, before the final engagement. M. Bocher, an intimate friend of the Orleans Princes, on being elected Chairman of the Right Centre, uttered a few words which were intended for the Left Centre. "Our party," said he, "has two names: it is Conservative, but also Liberal." The Left Centre, through its chairman, M. Corne, answered with similar vague courtesies.

Thereupon, the Legitimist party circulated a new letter from the Comte de Chambord, directly aimed at the plans for the organisation of the Septennate, and denouncing in ambiguous terms the ambitions attributed to the Duc d'Aumale, thus confirming once more the uncompromising policy of the elder branch. The *Union* published the following paragraph: "For a long time, the duty of the Right has been clearly indicated, and M. le Comte de Chambord, consulted by several Deputies, has but strengthened the resolutions of the Royalists in the Assembly by expressing to one of them (M. de la Rochette) his confidence that his friends would never vote anything *which might prevent or retard the return of the Monarchy* (*i. e.* they will oppose the organisation of the Septennate). This is nothing new to us, but we can understand the emotion of others. May this emotion *mark the end of chimerical enterprises and tighten the bonds of monarchical united forces.*"[1]

[1] "The Comte de Chambord said the other day to Bontoux . . . that he intended to follow him to Paris, and that he would re-enter without having

Presidential Message.

Marshal MacMahon thought it well to address the Assembly once more (3rd December). His Message alluded to the growing prosperity of the country, and to the calm and order which reigned everywhere. He made this a reason for congratulating himself on the truce afforded to the country by the Septennate, and to ask the Assembly to give to the power established by the Law of the 20th November, 1873, the strength which it required. He took it upon himself to answer the Frohsdorf manifesto: "I did not accept power in order to serve the aspirations of any party. . . . I call around me all men of good-will, without any distinction. . . . Nothing will discourage me in the accomplishment of my task. . . . My duty is not to desert the post in which you have placed me, but to stand by it until the last with an unconquerable firmness and a scrupulous respect for the Law."

---

made the shadow of a concession."—Private unpublished letter from the Duc Decazes to M. de Gontaut-Biron, 1st February, 1875.

Perhaps, in saying that, the Comte de Chambord was thinking of a letter written to him on the 25th August, 1874 (festival of St. Louis), by an illustrious prelate, Cardinal Lavigerie, and which contained the following extracts:

"Sire, it is useless to deny it; France, your France, is sinking. . . . Nothing is to be expected of the present Assembly, and still less of that which will come after it. . . . What the country really wants is a saviour . . . if the King . . . should present himself at the favourable moment, the whole country would acclaim him.

"Only three things are required, Sire, to re-establish royalty as it should be, that is without any diminution, without parliamentary concessions, and those three things, by a Providential dispensation, depend upon you alone.

"The first is a refusal from the Assembly to organise the Septennate.

"The second is that Dissolution be voted at the beginning of December.

"The third is the coming of the King, during the time of terror which will elapse between the vote of Dissolution and the new elections, to proclaim the Monarchy in one of our cities, with the assistance of one of our Army chiefs, commanding the place, and whom we should have secured beforehand. Some of them are ready. I know it.

"There will be a few days' struggle in a few places, which will serve you in the end."—*The Cardinal Lavigerie*, by Mgr. Baunard, vol. i., p. 447.

It seemed as if the old soldier meant to close any issue by which he might be tempted to *desert* his post.

It was tacitly agreed not to go farther into the subject, and the Assembly broached another debate which was anticipated with no less impatience, as it touched upon intimate sentiments and ideas: the Bill concerning the freedom of Higher Education.

Bill on Higher Education.

From the beginning of the century, in France, political parties, alternately kept away from the conduct of affairs, have had plenty of time to meditate upon the reasons of their being, and upon their respective theories: retirement is favourable to the growth of principles. Statesmen willingly utilise their enforced leisure by studying history and philosophy, consulting precedents, comparing theories, and building up systems.

From the vocabulary of polemics against Napoleon I, certain vague ideas and formulæ remained, generally accepted without discussion. It was an understood thing, for instance, that the Opposition should demand "decentralisation," and that it alone practised "the love of freedom." But, on coming to definitions and applications, difficulties appeared. Tocqueville, although a lucid thinker, expresses himself in the following terms concerning that verbal liberalism which he and his friends professed: "Do not ask me to analyse this sublime preference, it can only be felt. It enters of its own accord into the great hearts which God has prepared to receive it; it fills them with its fire. It is impossible to make it understood by mediocre minds who have never proved it." If we probe the matter, this means that Oppositions are hindered by certain excesses of governmental authority, and that they consider them unjust and insupportable until the time when they in their turn are in a position to commit them. Politics entirely consist in marking the limit between public

power and individual activity. But, in order to recognise that almost indefinable and always mobile frontier, a *savoir faire*, tact and dexterity are needed which are only to be acquired by experience and practice. Ready-made systems and formulæ are of very little use.

The difficulty is singularly complicated when, owing either to time or to custom, certain special groupings have become introduced into the social mass, always tending to increase and to multiply, such as churches, aristocracies, and associations. The existence of those large bodies may become inconvenient and even painful when they exaggerate their claim to an independent life or to the maintenance or development of certain privileges. A new problem then occurs which has taken up the whole of French history, the problem of States within the State. Castes, communes, provinces, noblemen, magistrates, the clergy, all are constantly building up their respective fortresses against society, and, at the precise point where their particular demands begin, they boldly plant a sign-board with one word on it, the same in every case: "Liberty."

Liberty and Privilege, two faces of a constantly recurring demand, an ambiguity which once again was at the root of the debate now before the Assembly, one of the most difficult intellectual problems that politicians ever had to solve—the organisation of Higher Education.

Is it the duty of the State to procure higher education for its young citizens? If so, is that duty also an exclusive right? What is to be the line of conduct of the State with regard to methods and curriculum? Indifference or exclusivism? Is the State to be the only teacher? and, if so, what is to be its doctrine?

The responsibility of the State in questions of education is now generally admitted. National tradition seems to be the only reservoir vast enough to contain all the

elements which are used in the preparation of the future. The more or less limited character of the mandate is alone in question. At the end of the Second Empire, people still discussed the limits of the power and even the competency of the Government.

It was acknowledged by all that, from that point of view, the Imperial administration had not been equal to its task. Here, as elsewhere, had been nothing but vanity, shams, carelessness, and disorganisation. The Court of Napoleon III neither appreciated nor understood studies which only tended to produce "ideologists," as the other Emperor expressed it. The Academies, the Sorbonne, and the Collége de France merely appeared as an ornament at the fêtes of St. Cloud and Compiègne. Laboratories, demonstration tables and professors' chairs were relegated to the attics or cellars of the Sorbonne. Science had become a mere accessory of Education.

After the war had made manifest the absolute lack of preparation or of mobilisation of the Imperial Government, the whole intellectual world raised an outcry in favour of German scientific methods and organisation. With that excess which Frenchmen often bring into such changes of opinion, people swore that everything was to be reformed in imitation of the conquerors. The State had failed in its task as an educator. The competency and authority of the State were impugned.

Freedom for higher studies was an old demand of the Church and of the French Catholic party. Montalembert had made it the object of a life-long struggle. The Law of 1833 had granted freedom for elementary education, and the Law of 1850 for secondary education. The staff of both branches could thus furnish to the social body very numerous recruits, specially prepared in the free schools; but if higher regions were to be reached, this special recruiting found no issue. The State, by its

monopoly of higher education, and by the conferring of degrees, held the door both of higher culture and of superior posts. This was the door which it was desired to open.

Already in 1849, M. de Falloux had instituted a Committee entrusted with the drawing up of a Bill on Higher Education; it had been unsuccessful. The Empire, hesitating in its ecclesiastical policy, had encouraged the hopes of the Catholic party, and, finally, in 1869, after the fall of M. Duruy, the Bill had been taken up again. A new preliminary Committee had been appointed by M. Segris. It was one of the points of the Liberal programme which had been swept away in the storm of 1870.

Mgr. Dupanloup was, in his own eyes, and in the opinion of the public, the heir of Montalembert, and his inheritance was neither without glory nor without risk. His biographer tells us that, when the Bishop of Orleans entered the National Assembly, he bore within him "the design which M. de Falloux had merely sketched out." He took to heart the preparation of future generations, as well as the direction of the present generation, for he thought of everything.[1]

To begin with, he understood the danger of placing himself, with his mitre and episcopal cross, at the head of a crusade of which Liberty was the banner. "It was thought," adds the same biographer, "that the name of a layman would excite less umbrage; the Bishop of Orleans willingly effaced himself, and a personal friend of his, the Comte Jaubert, *persona grata* in the Assembly, had the honour of introducing a Bill on Higher Education."

The special Committee spent eighteen months in considering the Bill. The Report was laid before the Assembly on the 15th July, 1873, but could not come up

[1] *Vie de Mgr. Dupanloup*, Abbé Lagrange, vol. iii., p. 306.

for discussion until the 3rd December, 1874, on the very day when the death of the Reporter was announced.

Another legislator of varied attainments, M. Laboulaye, undertook the Report. M. Paul Bert, who, in this matter, represents the modern spirit, and new scientific or Universitarian methods, spoke against the Bill. He admitted the principle of liberty, but demanded that it should be absolute; Higher Education should have full latitude on all subjects and for all doctrines. The State could fearlessly defy the most formidable rivals if its Universities were broadly and strongly organised,[1] and by the institution of *privat docenten*, the Universities themselves introduced liberty within their pale.

Mgr. Dupanloup was not one of those who remain very long behind the scenes. He answered M. Paul Bert in person, by his intervention alone revealing the *arrière pensée* of the promoters of the Bill. His speech was a long apology of the Church as an educative instrument. "Indeed," he cried, "who was it that created, in France and in Europe, Higher Education, Public Education, the Universities? Who endowed the world with schools? We, we alone, the Church." The Bishop's ecclesiastic "We" covered, so to speak, the whole history of ancient France. He extolled "the twenty-three Universities of the old *régime*, fertile and radiating *foci* of intellectual life," "free and independent Universities."

He put the Revolution on its trial. "Under the old *régime*, religion and liberty had created everything; revolutionary tyranny has destroyed everything. . . ." The speaker promised to give again to France, through Free Education, such men as Cuvier, Champollion,

[1] On the motion of M. Le Royer and M. Paul Bert's Report, the Assembly voted the creation at Bordeaux and Lyons of combined Faculties of Medicine and Pharmacy.

Burnouf, etc., and also to secure for the country libraries, laboratories, students, professors, everything that it lacked. The new law should, in one word, "restore the ancient alliance between Religion and Letters, between Genius and Faith."

However interesting the theory might be, it was impossible to state more clearly and more imprudently that in this Liberal Bill, Liberty was not alone in cause. A lay Professor answered the episcopal Professor, a speaker equally passionate, supporting an equally exclusive thesis.

The Bishop of Orleans had to deal with a formidable antagonist. M. Challemel-Lacour was dignified, vehement, and somewhat bitter. His cold, though congested, countenance formed a singular contrast with the animated manners of the Bishop. In the brilliant company of Republican protagonists, M. Challemel-Lacour played, in a somewhat tense manner, a part which suited his personality, the part of a Jacobin. The eminent Normalian, whom fate never satisfied though loading him with favours, found in his answer to Mgr. Dupanloup the occasion of one more brilliant success.

He began by denouncing the enterprises of "that so-called Liberty" as organised by the Bill, and by deriding the sudden passion of her new and "impetuous lovers." The Bill, he said, was an attack on the moral unity of France, on the security of the civil Government and on the external security of the country. "Only one interest is in question, that of the Catholic Church. No lay association can be established in order to profit by this new liberty. The only association which could profit by it is the only one which exists, rich, free, authorised, powerful, ever conquering and never satisfied, the Catholic Church. . . . The peril is great, for the object is to educate what are usually called the middle classes, the ruling classes. In those Universities, not only scientific men

will be trained, but future physicians, barristers, and professors who will foster indefinitely in this country the worst of discords, the discord of souls."

If the Bishop had put the Revolution on its trial, the Republican now attacked the Church. "The *Syllabus* has pronounced against modern liberties, therefore against the principles of all civil Governments, the principle upon which French society rests. We must choose. Will France, in the middle of a Europe dominated by the lay spirit, with all the risks which this would involve, become the champion of Ultramontanism, the fortress of the Catholic spirit, the instrument of clerical restoration?" M. Challemel-Lacour urged the Assembly "not to allow such a debate to be opened; let it be adjourned until a time when the dispositions of Catholicism will be modified, when the Catholic clergy, in one way or another, will have become reconciled to modern ideas; let it be adjourned until this Assembly, born in an hour of passionate illusion—which has believed itself called to an almost miraculous regeneration of France, which has imagined that the Revolution, its memories, principles and institutions, had for ever disappeared—until this Assembly shall have given place to another Assembly, sufficiently self-controlled and sure-minded to take up such questions and to solve them."

This was an attack on the Assembly itself. Only an orator with the authority, talent, and beauty of language of M. Challemel-Lacour could make such a speech and be listened to. The emotion caused was considerable; the partisans of the Bill rose at these irritating assertions, but the Bishop knew not how to turn the occasion to advantage. . . .

Next day, he made, in opposition to M. Challemel-Lacour's harangue, a reply which seemed both violent and painful, and only aggravated dissension.

The Conferring of Degrees.

M. Laboulaye, Reporter of the Bill, spoke once again, wisely, as a convinced Liberal. M. Bardoux began the political debate by moving an amendment which reserved for the State the conferring of degrees, and the Assembly voted the second reading by 531 votes against 124 (5th December). The Liberal section of the Left had voted with the Right.

The second debate took place a fortnight later, on the 21st December, when passions had had time to cool down. M. Pascal Duprat, seconded by M. Jules Ferry, moved an amendment: "Higher education to be free under the supervision of the State, in which alone is vested the right of conferring degrees." M. Pascal Duprat's speech was deserving of praise; intervening in the midst of the general conflict, his simple and sensible utterances deserve to be quoted. He took up a position between the two extremes, both of which invoked, each against the other, *a moral unity.*

"I ask for complete liberty," said he, "under the authority, of course, of the laws and police of the State. What objections can be formed against the principle of complete liberty? . . . It is obvious that the Church, the clergy, which is the organised Church, will seek to profit and will profit by freedom of teaching. That does not trouble me. The Church will use her right; I do not object to any one using a right, as long as that right is not a monopoly or a privilege. . . . As to intellectual unity, it has never existed. . . . St. Paul himself said that there must be heretics: *Oportet autem hæreses esse.* . . . It may even be said that Christian dogmas, in their historical development, have been but a more or less successful protest—which it does not devolve upon me to judge here—against heresies. . . . Some divisions are necessary, fated, part of man's very nature. . . . One thing we may allow ourselves to hope for is that,

liberty being recognised and practised, a reciprocal toleration may become established, and we may attain, not to a unity which seems scarcely possible, but to a moral fraternity sufficient for the grandeur of the country."

M. Pascal Duprat, M. Jules Ferry, and M. Bardoux all thought that the lay authority would be safeguarded if the State, in the name of the general interests which it represents, reserved the right to confer degrees. This modification considerably altered the Bill as reported by the Committee. On the other hand, the Catholic monopoly, threatened in its claims, attempted to defend them by an amendment proposed by MM. Adenet, Buisson, and Henri Fournier, which threw a light on the system. "Free establishments shall be administered by three persons at least. They shall include at least one Faculty, comprising the same number of Professors' chairs as one of the similar Faculties belonging to the State. Professors shall have a Doctor's Degree." Obviously, the Catholic Church alone was powerful enough to fulfil those conditions; it was therefore an ecclesiastical monopoly which stood face to face with the State's rights. The Assembly voted Clause I., which laid down the principle: "Higher Education shall be free." Then, unable to solve the dilemma with which it was now confronted, the Assembly decided to adjourn to another session the remainder of the debate.

The Bonapartist Peril.

However exciting these discussions might be, they did not turn the Deputies' minds from their constant anxiety, the Constitutional conflict. Parties faced each other and counted their forces, in view of the January session which was to be decisive. The two sections of Royalists had worn themselves out against each other; a third group remained, from the majority of the 24th May, not numerous in

Parliament, it is true, but powerful through the connection which it had kept up with the Army, State officials and rural electors: the Bonapartist party. Its star was now in the ascendant, its growing influence terrified the numerous adversaries which opposed it in the Assembly. The name of the Prince Imperial, the chances of his return, were beginning to form a constant subject of conversation.

Fear of anarchy always turns the thoughts of France towards Cæsarism; even if that fear is exaggerated, its existence is already a half-defeat, and men fear their own apprehensions. Many of those who had pronounced so decisively against the system adopted by a seven million suffrage, now saw with terror the Napoleonic shadow growing on the horizon.

The failure of the attempted "fusion" and the divisions in the Royalist camp were preparing the way. M. Amédée Lefèvre-Pontalis, speaking from the tribune, about that time, said, "You have overthrown the Empire, but you have not given it a successor." And J. J. Weiss, quoting that phrase, adds, "These words characterised that period of our history. They expressed a thought which perturbed sincere minds, and, through that very perturbation, brought them back towards the Empire."

If the Bonapartist party had been led at that time with vigour and decision, if it had more cleverly taken advantage of the position it had assumed by appealing to the national choice only, perhaps its hour of triumph would have come. Every one was getting tired of the Assembly and its vacillations.

But Bonapartism itself was suffering at that time from a similar kind of impotence. Its leader in the Assembly, who presided at its party meetings, the principal adviser of the Empress, M. Rouher, was a robust orator, a wise and judicious calculator of political chances; but, to

himself and to all, he remained a man of the past, dragging his heavy burden of tradition; moreover, his works were without faith. Around and below him, no leaders were to be found. In order to constitute the famous Committee revealed by the Girerd document and so much spoken of, strange collaborators had been recruited: a certain Lagrange, a man named Rouffic, shady individuals, in whose hands secrets were scarcely safe. . . .

And then, discord reigned in the Imperial family. At the elections in October 1874, Prince Jerome having been a candidate for the Ajaccio General Council, had met with the opposition of the whole official Bonapartism and the veto of the Prince Imperial. On being elected by a majority of 300, he had, in his letter of thanks, derided the blunders of the Empire, rejected the Dictatorial tradition, and invoked Revolutionary, Anti-clerical, Anti-monarchical and Democratic ideas in the name of "the true Napoleonic faith." In a word, he had brutally broken with the careful and wily tactics of the "Vice-Emperor."

M. Rouher was therefore standing in a very narrow pass when he found himself obliged to give an explanation to the Assembly with reference to the famous Committee of which he had denied the existence, and which an indiscretion,—perhaps treason,—had revealed to his adversaries.

The latter were holding him by the throat and did not intend to let him go. On the 22nd December, before the Assembly separated, a member of the Left, M. Goblet, asked a question of the Government "as to the result of the engagements entered into on the 9th June, with regard to the Central Committee of the Appeal to the People."

The inquiries which had been made had led to nothing. M. Delahaye, the "juge d'instruction," had found that

a Committee existed in Paris and one in the Nièvre; but neither of those Committees was composed of more than twenty members, and they had no relations with each other; therefore, they did not come under the law.

Meanwhile, the Baron de Bourgoing's election remained unconfirmed. On the proposal of the Keeper of the Seals, answering M. Goblet, the Committee question was joined on to the question of the confirmation of the election; the next day (23rd) the Assembly heard the Report of M. Horace de Choiseul, suggesting a Parliamentary inquiry to allow the Assembly to undertake judicial proceedings. The skirmish was a lively one. M. Raoul Duval opposed the inquiry; M. Ricard supported the proposition, declaring that it appeared from existing documents that the Committee of which M. Rouher had denied the existence was in working order, and that M. Rouher himself was its Chairman. M. Rouher, faced by his own declaration, could not refuse the inquiry. He accepted it, while protesting against a measure which indirectly submitted to a political assembly a judicial question interesting one of the parties within the Assembly.

The majority voted for an inquiry into Baron de Bourgoing's election, thus reasserting its Anti-Bonapartist sentiments; old rancours, the memory of the disasters which had befallen France, a latent Liberalism, and, above all, the fear of hated rivals, decided this vote, on the eve of the day when the Assembly had to pronounce on the *régime* in which the country was to take refuge.

On the 24th December, the Assembly adjourned until the 9th January, 1875.

CHAPTER III

THE REPUBLIC FOUNDED

I. Preparations for the debate on the Constitution.—The Committee of Thirty takes the initiative.—Conference at the Élysée.—Parliamentary Session resumed.—Message from the President (5th January, 1875).—The Government demands priority for the Senate Bill.—It is refused; resignation of the Cabinet.—Provisional arrangements.

II. First reading of the Bill for the Organisation of Public Powers.—First debate on the Bill for the creation of a Senate.

III. Second debate on the Bill for the Organisation of Public Powers.—Sittings of the 28th, 29th, and 30th January.—Solemn debate on Clause I.—M. Laboulaye's amendment.—M. Louis Blanc intervenes.—The Laboulaye amendment is rejected.—The Wallon amendment.—Negotiations of the Lavergne group.—M. Desjardins' proposition is rejected.—The Wallon amendment is voted by a majority of one.—Consequences of that vote.

IV. The second debate on the Public Powers Bill continued.—Dissolution and the Revision of Constitutional Laws suggested.—The seat of Public Powers remains fixed at Versailles.—Second debate on the Senate Bill.—The Pascal Duprat amendment voted.—Declarations of the Committee of Thirty and of the Government.—Dissolution demanded.—General confusion.

V. The Right offers the Dictatorship to the Marshal.—The Duc de Broglie refuses to form a Cabinet.—The Right against M. Buffet.—The Lavergne group intervenes between the two Centres.—The Marshal gives up the right to appoint Life Senators.—Agreement concluded.—The Senate Law and the Public Powers Law carried.

I

AT last came the opening of the session of January 1875, which was to determine the future of the country.

President Buffet had been re-elected in December. In his opening speech, he had solemnly invoked the

Lord's blessing on the labours of the Assembly, and his hearers had been struck by his emotion and his evident sense of responsibility. Indeed, that cold and reserved man, whose apparent stiffness perhaps concealed some uncertainty, was now called upon to fill an important part. The Assembly, without a programme or a leader, nominally conducted by a Government without authority, could but drift unless its President undertook to direct it.

The Moderate Rights, who still composed the leading party, stood in alternate fear of two possibilities: Dissolution and the triumph of Bonapartism. The Orleans Princes considered that the first duty was to consolidate that which existed, even if that should entail the organisation of Republican institutions: anything, to stand in the way of Bonapartism.

The Bonapartist party was full of hope. In its own eyes and in the eyes of the provinces, its strength was exaggerated. The ardent leader, whom the Neo-Imperialist party had found in the person of M. Raoul Duval, vehemently urged the Assembly to come to a conclusion, and constantly accused it of usurping power —a point on which the Assembly's conscience was not altogether easy.

On the Left, the partisans of Dissolution had not all laid down their arms. M. Louis Blanc calculated that twenty more votes would secure a majority for a motion to dissolve. Such important men as M. Thiers and M. Jules Grévy had pronounced in favour of a General Election. In the Press, M. Émile de Girardin demanded the convocation of a Constituent Assembly. The Assembly had to lose no time if the course of events was to remain under its control.

Each of the various groups faced the others with the desire to play a decisive game; procrastination was at an

end. The Moderate Right, usually so slow and so backward, prepared for the fight. The Duc de Broglie, behind the scenes, drew up the plan of campaign, which was handed to the Committee of Thirty.

Since the Government of the Marshal, a Government at once durable and provisional, was the only resource of the Royalist and Conservative parties, they decided to make it secure by solid institutions; it was also decided to perpetuate the will of the Assembly and to prolong in a new *régime* the chances of the Constitutional Monarchy that this Assembly had been powerless to restore. The idea was again entertained of a Second House, a Conservative Senate, which would especially "conserve" the chief preoccupation which had, in vain, filled men's minds at the time of the 24th of May. The Duc de Broglie had been unsuccessful when he proposed to the Assembly the institution of this Second Chamber. His proposition, slightly modified, was now taken up again. And now, once more, the question of priority arose.

The Committee of Thirty, in its sitting of the 16th December, decided to demand, at the very beginning of the session, the immediate discussion of the Senate Bill, with M. Antonin Lefèvre-Pontalis as Reporter, instead of the Ventavon Bill on the organisation of public powers. It was thought that the Left Centre would not refuse its assistance, and thus time would be gained, while a Parliamentary survival—perhaps salvation—might be obtained by the creation of the Senate.

The Left Centre did not lend itself to that combination. M. Dufaure, who was a member of the Committee, supported priority for the debate on the Ventavon Bill, which at least formed a constitutional whole. The attitude, or, as it was called, the "falling off" of the Left Centre at that critical moment, was a heavy blow to those who had prepared the manœuvre.

The game was so important that they decided to have recourse to drastic measures.

On the 29th December, after a special convocation from the General Secretary of the Presidency, the following persons were asked to attend a meeting at the Élysée: MM. Buffet, Dufaure, Casimir-Perier, Duc de Broglie, Bocher, Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier, Duc Decazes, de Kerdrel, Depeyre, General de Chabaud La Tour, Hamille, Chesnelong, and Léon Say. They sat round a table, the Marshal in the centre, with General Chabaud La Tour on his right and the Duc Decazes on his left; opposite to him sat M. Buffet, between the Duc de Broglie and M. Dufaure.

It might have been thought that such a gathering of "moderate men of all parties" had assembled to tender advice to the Marshal-President on questions which could no longer be retarded. However, M. Thiers and M. Jules Grévy were not present.

It was seen by the opening speech of the Marshal, that the game was arranged in order to bring pressure upon the Left Centre, and to obtain from its eminent members a modification in the order of proceedings which would make it possible, as M. Buffet expressed it, "to constitute a Second Chamber, so that when the election becomes necessary, the Marshal should not be left alone, face to face with a new Assembly."

M. Buffet spoke in the most conciliatory manner: "He himself would try for the best; if he could not succeed, he would accept what seemed to him the next best; he would even go as far as what seemed to him bad to a certain extent, for he was convinced that, under existing circumstances, a dissolution would be the worst of dangers."

Marshal MacMahon, with his usual good sense, said that if Dissolution were made use of to send away a Radical

Chamber, another Radical Chamber would probably be returned; as to the Army, he would never make use of it against National Representation, as that would accord neither with his character nor with his principles.

The Ministers, General de Chabaud La Tour and the Duc Decazes, described external and internal dangers. The Duc Decazes seemed uneasy. General de Chabaud La Tour mentioned a plot against the General's life. The Duc Pasquier declared that it would be painful to him to separate from his friends, with whom he had remained until then, but that, after the failure of the Monarchical Restoration, it was impossible to refuse the country's wish for an organised government. He asked that *the Presidency* (he did not say "the Marshal's Presidency") *should be constituted so as to last until the 20th November*, 1880; these words seemed to mean that the function itself was of more importance than the man who filled it. Was a change of persons contemplated? M. Chesnelong advised procrastination. MM. de Kerdrel and Depeyre insisted that "the door should not be closed to the King" at the issue of the Marshal's Presidency. The Duc de Broglie prudently took up his position between the various groups of the Right. He provoked explanations from M. Dufaure and M. Léon Say, who represented the Left Centre.

M. Dufaure was annoyed, and wondered why he had been brought there. He answered plainly, since he was asked what was to be done, that the thing to be done was to proclaim the Republic, and thus to secure the normal transmission of powers when the 20th November, 1880, was reached: the Left Centre remained faithful to the system of the organisation of the constitutional laws, without intrigue or manœuvring.

M. Dufaure, softening a little, remarked that the procedure of revision, accepted by all, left the door open to

the hopes of the Right. His declaration in favour of the Republic with a Senate and a possible revision was so precise and so formal that it made a great impression upon his hearers. The following is the report of it as published by the Republican *Évènement:* "You can formulate this Revision clause, as strongly as you like; I admit that if such a strong current of opinion were to rise against the Republic that the Constituent Assembly of 1880 should be anti-Republican, that Constituent Assembly would have the right to change the form of Government." This was holding out a hand. The Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier, much embarrassed, still did not wish the *i*'s dotted too carefully; all monarchical hopes were not yet abandoned.

A formula was sought. M. Bocher, friend and confidant of the Orleans Princes, proposed, with the Duc de Broglie's assent, that the order of proceedings in the Assembly should immediately be settled, in this sense that the debate on the Senate Bill should come first: this was the main object of the conference.

After a long discussion, it was decided that the Bill might be debated first, on condition that some "bond of solidarity" should be established between the discussion of it and that of the Bill on Public Powers. At another conference, which took place the next day, the Senate Bill was to be examined; but, this time, the members of the Left Centre evaded the subject. The famous Union of the Centres could not be formed, even under the benevolent eye of the President.

The Extreme Right, who had been left out of those negotiations, assumed a menacing attitude. They denounced the Marshal's dictatorship, the ambitions of the Duc d'Aumale. On the day when the session was resumed, M. de Vinols said to the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier, "If the Marshal takes another step towards the Left, he

is lost; he forfeits the confidence of the Conservative party, and that confidence is all his strength." "Then give him what he asks for," replied the Duc Pasquier, "give him a Senate."

The *Univers* and the *Union* declared that the Marshal was in fact breaking with the Royalists, and bringing about a Government as well as a Cabinet crisis.

The Session Resumed.

The Assembly returned to work on Tuesday, the 5th January. M. Grivart, Minister of Commerce, read a new Presidential Message. The Marshal asked the Assembly to proceed immediately to the debate on the Senate Bill. It was whispered that the Duc Decazes had edited the Message. The Orleanist Right Centre still hoped to avoid the consecration of Republican institutions.[1] The Message was coldly received, an indescribable *malaise* reigned in the Assembly.

M. Batbie, President of the Committee of Thirty, asked that priority should be accorded to the Bill on the Second Chamber rather than to the Public Powers Organisation Bill. He pointed out that there would be some connection between the two Bills.

[1] A letter from the Duc Decazes to the Vicomte de Gontaut-Biron, Ambassador in Berlin, gives us the opinion of the former at that date. "You are right . . . the Message—in its eclecticism—contained a sort of implicit adhesion to the impersonal Septennate; but it would be a mistake to read in it advances to the Centre, or, still less, the result of an agreement with that group. Our terror is that a definitive Republic should be proclaimed under some Perier proposal, and, as we know that a good half of the Right Centre, in the ardour of its indignation against the Extreme Right, is ready to let itself be dragged in that direction, we have thought it necessary to bring it back by a concession which seems to us a reasonable one. . . . Between ourselves, the Marshal seems decided to resign if the Republic is proclaimed. So I do not hesitate to say that everything must be done to prevent that result. Besides, it is probable that nothing in the Constitutional laws will be touched; if that is so, if the discussion has not increased the general perturbation and division, de Broglie will perhaps be able to form his Cabinet and have a few months' peace. . . . If we succeed in avoiding the Republican proclamation, nothing will be lost."—(Unpublished private document.)

From that moment, M. Laboulaye assumed a preponderating *rôle*. "Let us organise the Senate, by all means," said he. "But for what Government? . . . Are we to create an hypothetical Senate for an hypothetical Government? . . . Let us be frank: if there be any among us who wish for a Constitutional Monarchy, let them say so, and, especially, let them introduce their Constitutional King."

And he added, clearly aiming at the "Stadhouderate": "If, on the other hand, we intend to do nothing, let us have the courage to declare that France will be left in uncertainty for six years, and that, one day, some combination, I do not know which, will be arrived at!"

M. Antonin Lefèvre-Pontalis, Reporter of the Senate Bill, supported the Committee's proposal. M. Jules Simon was even more outspoken than M. Laboulaye: "We want to know whether we have or have not a Republic." General Chabaud La Tour, Minister of the Interior, revealed the thoughts of the Government by the almost comical phrase: "We must have a Senate for the Septennate."

By a sitting and standing vote, the Assembly refused to give priority to the Second Chamber Bill, thus upsetting the whole calculation. It was said that the Left Centre had voted in the negative, under pressure from M. Thiers. As to the Extreme Right, its members had voted with the Lefts, "a new coalition," said M. Antonin Lefèvre-Pontalis. The Orleanists were discomfited for the second time.

Resignation of the Cabinet.

At the end of the sitting, the Ministers handed their resignation to the President. What was he to do? Should he insist, relinquish power, or wait, keeping himself within the limits of an absolute neutrality. Advised, it is said, by the Duc de Broglie, he adopted this last plan. The *Journal*

Officiel of the 8th January published the following note: "After the vote of the 6th January, the Ministers offered their resignation to the President of the Republic, who asked them to continue to administer their several departments whilst a new Cabinet was being formed."

This strange situation was to be prolonged. With regard to the elaboration of the Constitution, the Cabinet and the President himself were now *hors de combat.*

The Assembly gave up eight sittings to the first reading and discussion of the Bill on the Military Staff, a very technical and thorough debate. But the mind of the Deputies was elsewhere.

A singular activity reigned, during those eight days, in the lobbies and in those dark parliamentary corners in which men's consciences are measured and weighed, a secret work which the historian often fails to trace. Only this is known, that a supreme attempt was made to reconcile the Rights and to reconstruct the majority of the 24th May. A meeting of the leaders took place under the presidency of M. Bocher. But the quarrel was merely embittered, and sharp words were uttered. The Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier started on another tack. "We must draw nearer to the Lefts and consent to the Republic for six years. There is nothing to be done with the Extreme Right." The efforts of the Duc de Broglie to bring about the adoption of a common plan of action entirely failed. The *Patrie* announced that, after the meeting, MM. Bocher and d'Audiffret-Pasquier, who were on the whole responsible for its failure, "went to give an account of it to the Prince de Joinville."

If proofs were necessary to show the direct interference of the Orleans Princes, written testimony is not lacking. On the 7th January, 1875, the Comte de Paris wrote to M. Adrien Léon, of the Right Centre: "I am always happy to converse with those who share my

convictions, even when (as is not the case with you) our opinions may differ on certain questions. After carefully reading the *Journal Officiel's* report of yesterday's sitting, I cannot persuade myself that all chance is lost of giving to our country *the institutions required for its security*. . . . In spite of present difficulties and of the facility with which the Assembly votes in the negative, *I will believe that it includes the elements of a Constitutional party*, comprising all those who refuse to leave the country the prey of any hazard, any accident, and *to open the door to the system which has brought it so low*."[1]

A "Constitutional party": this was an ambiguous expression. But it was obvious that a Constitution would be accepted, in order to avoid the worst.

II

The debate opened on the 21st January, the anniversary of the death of Louis XVI, a fact which was remarked upon by the members of the Extreme Right.

The first discussion on the Public Powers Organisation Bill began quietly, bearing solely on questions of principle.

The massed groups faced each other, measuring forces. The Extreme Right, passionate and determined, blindly followed the instructions from Frohsdorf, which were: to obstruct everything, to make their strength felt, and to expose the powerlessness of the Assembly. Rancour, latent fury and contempt appeared on every countenance. The members of this group, implacable towards former friends, now their adversaries, denounced the ambitions and intrigues of the Right Centre.

The Right and Moderate Right formed a group which

[1] Unpublished private document.

was imposing by its numbers, its self-confidence, the habit of victory and the valour of its chiefs; the latter now again leading the attack and believing that they commanded the situation. The Right Centre, perturbed, anxious, a prey to internal conflicts, alternately adopted contradictory resolutions.

The Left Centre, armed for the fight, gathered around M. Dufaure, whose eyes were fixed on M. Thiers.

The Left remained silent around Gambetta. The Extreme Left formed a very small group, reserved and hostile.

The Bonapartists were eager, but weighed down by the adverse feeling which met them on every side at this supreme moment.

The physical atmosphere also was oppressive and laden with electricity; several times in the course of the debate, voices arose demanding "Air, more air!"

M. de Ventavon and his Bill.

M. de Ventavon opened the debate. The contrast between the grandeur of the circumstances and this little man, with his little Bill, was a strange one. The Bill, of which he was the author, the Reporter and the sponsor, treated *Of the Organisation and Transmission of Public Powers.* Apart from this solemn title, M. Casimir de Ventavon made himself as humble as possible. "It is not a Constitution which I have the honour to submit to you," said he, "it is merely the organisation of temporary powers, the powers of a man. . . ."

The Bill maintained the Septennate, confirmed the existence of two Chambers, attributed to the Marshal the right of dissolving the Chamber of Deputies without conditions, and also the facility of provoking a revision at any time during his term of authority. At the expiration of his powers, as in case of a premature Presidential vacancy, the two Chambers, united in a Congress, were to decide on the course to be taken.

This constitutional embryo served as a text for discussion. M. de Ventavon epitomised in one sentence the ruling idea of the Committee: "Let the future be completely untrammelled; let each man preserve his faith and his hopes." Such was the pabulum offered to a country hungering and thirsting for precision and stability.

M. Lenoël, a friend of M. Thiers, delivered a strong speech against the Bill, of which he gave the following definition: "What the Bill proposes is to create a temporary monarchy which will exclude other monarchies for a time and the Republic for ever. You have proclaimed a principle," he added, "that of national Sovereignty; you must follow it to its logical and necessary conclusion, which is the Republic."

M. Ch. de Lacombe, Berryer's friend and biographer, supported the Committee. France should be given time to see clearly into her own desires, and, while waiting for that distant time, should be guarded against her own impulses.

M. de Carayon-Latour.

Until then, arguments on either side had been carefully balanced. But some excitement now began to pervade the debate. A valiant servant of the Legitimist cause, a brave-hearted soldier and a good man, M. de Carayon-Latour, drew, from the depths of his conscience, a rough and awkward speech, badly delivered, no doubt, but the sincerity of which broke down all carefully prepared combinations. M. de Carayon-Latour exposed the blunders of that majority, monarchical at Bordeaux on the morrow of national catastrophes, and now almost ready to vote for the Republic. He accused M. Thiers, M. de Broglie, the Moderate Rights; he denounced the contempt for principles, the hatred of authority—in a word, the Revolutionary spirit—to be found amongst those very men who claimed to combat it. He quoted

the recently published dispatch from Bismarck to Count v. Arnim, expressing a hope that France might constitute a Republic and thus lose Monarchical alliances. . . . Perils abroad, disorders within, and, to end up with, the usual sequel to Republics in France, the Empire—such was the picture opposed by M. de Carayon-Latour to that drawn by M. Lenoël. It is yet time, he cried to the Rights, collect yourselves, retrace your steps; found the Monarchy. . . . "We love our country too well not to preserve until the last moment the hope that this Assembly which has already rendered France such signal service, will complete its work by recalling the King."

This speech, Frohsdorf's revenge, closed the sitting of the 21st January. Passions had gradually risen, set on fire by M. de Carayon-Latour. Delay only served to excite them, and they burst out during the sitting of 22nd January. "Only those who were present at that sitting," writes a witness, "only those who saw the crowd of excited faces, who heard the insulting interruptions which stopped the speakers at every moment, the noisy exclamations from both sides and the furious applause mixed with groans and murmurs of protest, can have an idea of the profound disorder which reigned in the Assembly."[1]

On that day of barren and dangerous violence, each party stood at the bar in its turn and rendered account. M. de Meaux was the spokesman of the Right Centre; he pleaded that nothing was left to France save her trust in a man, a soldier, "whom the country found by a stroke of unexpected good fortune"; could this soldier, this chief, be refused the laws he asked for? . . . the Septennate was an anchor of salvation, nothing should be thought of but to make it safer and stronger.

M. Lucien Brun returned to the charge in the name

[1] Louis Blanc, *Histoire de la Constitution du 25 Février*, 1875.

of the Legitimists: We have been betrayed. We had the Monarchy ready, a dignified and honourable Monarchy. It was eluded; a bastard system was substituted for it, a system with no future and with so little stability that the question was always arising of how was it best to be strengthened. The only possible course was to revert to the ancient tradition of the country, the monarchical one. "What is it you lack to create the Monarchy? At any rate, you do not lack a King. You have the King, the most exalted incarnation of moral greatness and manly dignity. . . . Neither do you lack an heir to the throne; his action on the 5th August was one of those which mark a date in the life of a nation and which suffice to honour a prince. You have a Royal family, the most national and patriotic that any nation could be proud of. . . . What then is lacking for this Monarchy which you call impossible? Merely the assistance of your own will. Put aside the various Bills produced! Fortify the temporary power that you have constituted, well and good; but let it become the very source of the restoration of ancient rights and of the dynasty which will secure for you peace and harmony, freedom guaranteed by respect for authority."

Embarrassment of the Duc de Broglie.

The Duc de Broglie was again forced to explain himself. He was sadly embarrassed; the edifice he had been building so carefully and so long was falling about his ears. He brought the debate back to the everlasting quotation of the law of the 20th November, 1873. "We have deceived nobody; we clearly explained that Marshal MacMahon was placed for seven years at the head of affairs: no one has a right to ask him to withdraw. As to the Constitutional Laws which are to-day submitted to you, we announced them also. I still hope," said the speaker in conclusion, seeking a last refuge, "I still hope that we may find a common ground

upon which to establish a regular and pacific Government, capable of inspiring the country with confidence and security."

Even in that retreat, the leader of the Rights was tracked by M. Raoul Duval. "When the Duc de Broglie declared that no uncertainty could be left in any man's mind, he forgot that, during the month of November 1873, I asked him for a categorical answer to the following question: Is it to be seven years of authority? yes or no? During those seven years, shall we, or not, have the power to re-establish the Monarchy? I do not think that, on that day, the Prime Minister answered with the sincerity on which he prided himself just now. . . ."

The Right Centre was sufficiently crushed. M. Bérenger, of the Left Centre, turned upon the Extreme Right. "You are always complaining of having been deceived," said he. "To be constantly duped is not to give a proof of great political capacity. . . . You did not object to equivocation when you thought it useful. We face it now as we did then. . . . You voted for the Septennate owing to the force of circumstances, we are now making it into a reality; it must cease to be a curtain hanging in front of an unfinished statue, and what a statue! As to us, we will take as a text the plan which you offer us, not in order to produce once more the nothingness which you have conceived, but something real, something better."

The Government, somewhat disconcerted, insisted nevertheless upon a second reading.

Jules Favre speaks.

Then came the knot of the drama: a veteran of ancient fights, a famous orator who had been silent for long months and whose fateful figure had been present at many events without taking any part in them, M. Jules Favre, ascended the tribune. His mere appearance evoked sombre pictures of romantic and disastrous times. "Here was that superbly tragical countenance,

almost beyond human proportions, that bronze face, modelled in a few ineradicable strokes, so strangely accentuated by the haughty and extraordinarily prominent under-lip from which flowed an abundant white beard; here was that great forehead, covered with a forest of grey hair, under the shadow of which two deep-set eyes looked out as from a dark halo, with a cold intensity. We recognised that musical voice pouring forth limpid speech, that cold though sumptuous language. . . ."[1]

The Revolution had been on its trial; M. Jules Favre now dealt with Royalty. There are times in history when slumbering episodes arise and stand up for judgment, for the past is judged by the consequences which the future unrolls. Neither the St. Barthélemy, nor the reign of Louis XIV, nor the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, were absent in that solemn hour when crimes were evoked as well as services. . . .

The whole past seemed to revive in the powerful words of the aged orator, leaning against the tribune in a robust attitude. His eloquence knew no bounds, and raised the whirlwind. Protests, shouts and invectives filled the air. The Rights, provoked, stricken, insulted, cried out. Nothing could stop the acrid stream of vengeance as it flowed from an embittered heart: "The power fell into your hands. You called yourselves 'Conservatives.' What have you conserved? Nothing that I can see, save Imperial tradition, restored and increased; an arbitrary state of siege; a whole procession of exceptional laws. . . . You, who had come on the scene with the word Liberty on your lips, you have brought us nothing but reaction. Make room, now, make room for National Sovereignty which you have betrayed."

M. Bocher answered. Good-humouredly at first, then

[1] Camille Pelletan, *Le Théatre de Versailles*, p. 237.

with vivacity, and at last with virulence, he re-opened the debate, and made a counter-attack on the Republic: "Three times has the Republic been established in France, three times has it foundered in blood and disorder." He continued in this strain, "pale, striking the tribune with his hand, anger altering the sound of his voice."[1]

Men's minds remained uncertain while their hearts were full. That terrible debate had exhausted the Assembly. By 538 votes against 145, the second reading was voted. And, by a last movement of passion, it was decided to place the report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Actions of the National Defence Government immediately after the Constitutional Laws.

Three days passed. A calm day followed upon a day of excitement, for, in that agitated and fruitful month, contrasts succeeded each other like the lights and shadows across an April sky. The two Bills, with the Parliamentary complication of three readings, occupied men's minds at the same time. Only with Ariadne's thread would it be possible to find a way out of that labyrinth.

The Senate Bill.

We have now come (25th January) to the first discussion of the Bill on the creation and functions of a Senate. A fortnight before, this Bill meant salvation; it was now produced, as M. Jules Simon remarks, "in the midst of general indifference."

The harmless Macchiavelism of the System was exposed. The Reporter, M. Antonin Lefèvre-Pontalis, acknowledged it in the most *naïve* manner. "The hour for bringing reforms into Universal Suffrage has passed by," said he; "no guarantee remains to us but the institution of a Second Chamber. . . . We want to

[1] Louis Blanc, p. 69.

place before the Revolutionary party a barrier sufficient to prevent it from seizing power *in a legal way. . . .*" As if it were possible to prevent the *legal* exercise of an acknowledged right! M. Bardoux, a wit, agreeably chaffed the Committee of Thirty and suggested that M. de Ventavon and M. Lefèvre-Pontalis should be made to agree. Mere words.

Two speeches, however, were more than mere words. M. Raoul Duval, with a bitter frankness, went deeply into the question and touched the rock whilst the policy of compromise was working, as he expressed it, "through Parliamentary underground tunnels." The constituent power of the Assembly was not indisputable nor was it left undisputed. Monarchy was impossible. The Republic had been rejected by the vote on the Casimir-Perier proposal. "I should have little faith in the future of a Republic created, after that, by a powerless Assembly."

As to the proposal of the Committee which consisted in delegating a portion of that doubtful constitutional sovereignty and in giving to a temporary Assembly a mandate to elect Life Senators, it was a bold absurdity. "If you are empowered to draw up a Constitution, you must first choose between a Monarchy and the Republic. If you do not wish to make that choice, you must submit your difficulties to the nation."

Bonapartism embodied the thesis of the Appeal to the People, which, as opposed to that of Representation, might again find favour in a country always partial to simple forms, rapid gestures and rigorous logic. M. Raoul Duval, by using the weapon of direct and immediate Popular Sovereignty, before the Assembly and against the Assembly, was working for the future.

The Extreme Left was well aware of this; that is why its members hesitated to follow the Left Centre

and the Moderate Left under the Caudine Forks of the Right, towards which a more wily but also a more dangerous policy was preparing to carry it.

M. Jules Simon was the mouthpiece of that policy. He bargained from the tribune, alternately consenting and refusing, granting in order to obtain. "We are reconciled with the idea of a Second Chamber. You are carrying through this your great and principal business: God forbid that we should put any obstacles in your way. . . . The Republican Party has been accused of intolerance. On the contrary, we are constantly giving proofs of our moderation. We have accepted the Republic without Republicans, we have accepted the constituent mandate of the Assembly; we now accept the discussion of your Constitutional plans. But there is one thing which we shall never, never accept," declared the future Life Senator, in a loud voice; "it is that one man should obtain either the Constituent or the Legislative Power, without having this power conferred upon him directly through the Universal Suffrage of the nation." M. Jules Simon went on: "There is an impassable barrier between your Bill and ourselves; and this Second Chamber, such as you propose it, will never,—no, never,—obtain a single one of our votes."

"Never" is a word which should never be uttered.

The second reading was passed by 498 votes against 173, a majority of 325 in favour of a Second Chamber. Yet, not only the Extreme Right and the Bonapartists voted against, but also a section of the Republican Union, with M. Gambetta. The institution of a Second Chamber was a sacrifice for which many Republicans were not yet prepared.

III

Second Discussion of the Public Powers Bill.

The three memorable sittings of the 28th, 29th and 30th January were practically one. On the agenda was inscribed the second discussion of the Ventavon Bill on the organisation of public powers: that is to say, the consolidation of the Septennate.

CLAUSE I.—The Legislative power shall be exercised by two Assemblies: the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

The Chamber of Deputies shall be elected by Universal Suffrage, under conditions determined by electoral laws.

The Senate shall be composed of members elected or appointed in proportions and under conditions to be dealt with by a special law.

An anonymous power, and an indeterminate system.

M. Naquet introduced a counter-proposal developing a whole system in conformity with traditional Republican doctrines: One Chamber only; no President of the Republic; a President of the Council responsible to the Chamber; no Parliamentary Ministers; revision always possible by a Constituent Assembly; direct ratification of the new Constitution by Universal Suffrage. . . . It might have been 1848 over again. M. Naquet's Bill was rejected without further discussion.

Now for the real struggle. An amendment to Clause I. of the Ventavon Bill was introduced, at the instigation of M. Thiers, by MM. Corne, Chairman of the Left Centre, Bardoux, Colonel de Chadois, Chiris, Danelle-Barnardin, and Laboulaye; the amendment was as follows: "*The Government of the Republic* consists of two Chambers and a President."

"The Government of the Republic," here was the word and the thing; the goal seemed nearer.

M. Laboulaye supported the amendment.

This was M. Laboulaye's great day; his whole life had been a preparation for this one hour. His qualities, natural or acquired, his acute good sense, his special erudition, his well-known Liberalism, his firm and supple dialectics, his attractive manner, everything combined to ensure for him an authority perhaps more convincing than imposing, but rarely felt in the same degree by a public assembly.

Many more illustrious speakers failed to obtain a success to be compared with that which he secured on that day; he charmed, moved, and persuaded his hearers. In the history of the United States, from which he sought examples, men were found at the beginning, men remarkable by their wisdom, vigour, foresight, decision and tact. Hamilton, Madison, Jay, were the veritable "Fathers of the Constitution," incomparable servants of their country and of Liberty. M. Laboulaye, who was inspired by their example during the debates which founded the French Republic, deserves to be placed on the same rank by historical justice and by Republican gratitude.

The speech which he delivered was on the whole but a repetition, a translation, of all that had already been said in conversations, from the tribune and by the Press, in favour of the Republic. Parliamentary eloquence requires neither beauty of form nor originality of substance. Beyond the walls of the Chamber, it addresses the masses, explaining and, if necessary, reiterating simple arguments, reasons likely to decide confused minds and uncertain souls. At such a time, the whole nation becomes transformed into one great council; what it demands, what it expects, is not an orator, but a Man.

Speech of M. Laboulaye.

M. Laboulaye was that man. He began by pointing out that the Republic was an *existing fact.* None of the rival parties could offer a

Government to France. He insisted upon the conformity of principle between a Constitutional Monarchy and a Parliamentary Republic, with this difference, however, that the latter, without contradicting its principles, may from its very birth accept the possibility of an eventual revision: "The only thing which we do not admit, and you will see how small is the difference, is that you wanted to condemn France in 1880 to recast her Constitution, whereas we think it better to leave France in 1880 free to do as she likes. . . . As to that strange idea that an Assembly, at a time when it will no longer exist, should force the country, which may then be perfectly content, to put its Government in question again, it is a singular delusion. . . ."

A statement that the Republic by its continued existence had already been proved, an enumeration of services already rendered, an affirmation of order maintained, rights and sentiments respected, everything was called in. "Has the Republic threatened religion? . . . Now-a-days, in the whole of Europe, there is a sort of mania, the mania of Catholic persecution. . . . Is it so in France? All those banished priests, those sisters who are driven away, though they have by their good works acquired a right to the respect of unbelievers even, where do they go? Where do they find a refuge? In France; and it is within this Republic that the most complete, the most entire security is to be found. . . ."

M. Laboulaye went on with pressing, breathless arguments; after reassuring his audience, he proceeded to alarm it: "We must think of the situation in which we shall find ourselves to-morrow when, after having tried every solution, we shall have accepted none. I do not come here in order to demonstrate to you the comparative merits of the Monarchy and the Republic. I only wish to tell you that the circle is being narrowed

and necessity becoming urgent. The peril outside is imminent; we may be on the eve of a new war. Our disorder, our helplessness, are being watched. At home the peril is no less great. With the Republic, you can make a Government; if you reject it, you will have no Government at all. . . . If we do not make a Constitution, our mandate is at an end; we must hand it back to the nation. . . ."

This was an immediate, direct, unanswerable argument. It touched each of those men who had to pronounce, to vote. "If to-morrow you do not form a regular, constitutional Government, it is a Dissolution Cabinet. . . . I know we shall have an energetic Ministry which will force and stultify the elections. M. de Polignac's game will again be played. . . . No nation is exposed to such conditions of existence, and it is possible that, before a new Assembly meets, the whole Parliamentary system will founder and France with it."

Memories of the war and of the Commune were not far behind, and anguish lingered in many hearts. The diplomatic situation was a critical one, the fact was known and fear expressed in anxious whispers. The Assembly was composed of good citizens; they were not insensible to the appeal with which that honest man concluded his honest speech. "Yes, gentlemen, I venture to rely upon your patriotism, and I say that in our present situation, I may go as far as to pray earnestly that you will consider where we shall be to-morrow, and reflect on the decision which you are about to take. At this moment, the whole of Europe is watching you, France is imploring you, and we, we beseech you; we say to you: Do not assume such a responsibility! Do not leave us to the unknown, and, to put it all in one word, have pity, pity on your unhappy country!"

The effect of the speech and of the peroration was such that the Assembly rose and held out hands towards the orator.

The game was won. Immediate voting was demanded. The day was almost over. "Vote! vote!" The closure was pronounced, the ballot about to be opened. . . . M. Louis Blanc rose to speak on the position of the question.

M. Louis Blanc Intervenes.

There was a cry of impatience and reprobation on the benches of the Left. "There is no position of the question," shouted M. Ernast Picard. But M. Louis Blanc would speak. He waited, his arms crossed, his countenance cold. The Right supported him. Amidst interruptions, he opposed the creation of a Second Chamber. Nothing would be more fatal to the Republic. He evoked the memory of 1848 (!!!). He expressed a regret that the Grévy amendment was not adopted then. It was a new discussion. He affirmed that the Republic could not be voted because it could not be put in question. He declared that he and his friends could not vote. They numbered five.

M. de Castellane took advantage of this incident which had prolonged the debate and allowed men to regain control of their minds. He demanded that the vote should be postponed to another sitting. The adjournment was carried.

The *République Française*, M. Gambetta's journal, published on the following day a virulent article against M. Louis Blanc. "Against the wish of his whole party, M. Louis Blanc occupied the tribune. Absorbed in his own personal opinion, he did not see what was going on in the ranks of the adversaries of the Republic. He gave them time to confer together, to reform their ranks, to draw up a plan of campaign. . . . M. Louis Blanc invokes his conscience. Perhaps he can pay his

own pride in that coin. . . . It is a heavy responsibility, which we leave entirely to him. We hope that it may not weigh too heavily on that scrupulous conscience after the fumes of a now too-generally known vanity shall have completely evaporated."

Two theories, two systems, two methods were now face to face. The germ of future Republican dissension was laid in the egg from which the Republic itself was to be hatched.

Paragraph 1 of Clause I. of the Ventavon Bill was discussed: "The Legislative power will be exercised by two Assemblies: the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate." It was carried by a show of hands.

At the sitting of Friday, the 29th January, a public ballot at the tribune took place on the Laboulaye amendment. A stormy anxiety prevailed. Each Deputy was watched as he went up the steps, his ballot-paper in his hand. M. Léonce de Lavergne, who was ill, had been carried to the Galerie des Tombeaux, whence he sent a white bulletin. M. Buisson (Seine Inférieure) and M. de Kergariou had to be assisted up to the ballot-box.

The five members of the Extreme Left, MM. Louis Blanc, Edgar Quinet, Madier de Montjau, Peyrat and Marcou, abstained. As the ballot was being completed, a rumour went round that only five more votes were necessary for the amendment to be carried. M. Peyrat rushed to the library where MM. Louis Blanc and Marcou had retired. "Five more votes, and the Republic will be voted," he cried: "come!" Others added their supplications to his. "We let ourselves be dragged to the tribune," writes M. Louis Blanc, "and we threw, one after the other, our papers in the box, amidst general excitement and the noise of plaudits which pierced our hearts like arrows."

The Laboulaye Amendment Rejected.

At twenty-five minutes past four, the result was announced. The amendment was rejected by 359 votes against 336. The Assembly would not have the Republic.

A report spread, however, after a few rapid words from M. Antonin Lefèvre-Pontalis: a Wallon amendment was spoken of. Paragraph 2 read as follows:

The Chamber of Deputies is elected by Universal Suffrage, under conditions determined by the electoral law.

Adopted without discussion. Paragraph 3, as modified by the Committee itself on M. Marcel Barthe's proposition:

The composition, mode of election and functions of the Senate shall be regulated by a special law.

Carried. The whole of Clause I. was then voted by a show of hands. It was the Septennate.

M. Wallon moved the following additional paragraph:

The President of the Republic shall be elected by a majority of votes by a meeting of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies united in one National Assembly. He shall be appointed for seven years, and be capable of re-election.

What was this, the Septennate turned into a Republic? M. de Ventavon demanded that this be referred to the Committee. It was decided to adopt this course; and the sitting was concluded.

The Wallon Amendment.

The night passed on the rejection of the Laboulaye amendment, with the slight hope left by the Wallon rider.

On reflection, this motion was seen to be full of possibilities, and, if such a word can be applied to so straightforward a man, full of artifice. It expressed, in attenuated terms, all that men had been thinking and afraid of saying for many months. A fragment from a more complete proposition, it had been touched up (and was destined to be altered once again in the course of

the debate) until it had become a whole Constitution in itself. A humble postscript to Clause I. of the Ventavon Bill, it endowed it with substance, flavour, and vitality. The Republic was recognised by the title of the Head of the State: there was no need to proclaim it solemnly. By dealing with the mode of transmission of Presidential powers, the hereditary monarchy and the plebiscitary principle were put on one side; there was no need to dwell on either alternative. Finally, the possibility of re-election ensured a certain stability. The Law of the 20th November, 1873, which had instituted the Septennate of Marshal MacMahon, was therefore respected; or, rather, it was itself transformed by being interpreted into a law constituting the Republic. Until 1880, the Republic preserved, it is true, an exceptional and transitory character. But there was time to think about that. This motion might unite the votes of those who wanted the Republic now, and those who would perhaps not refuse to accept it later on. Nothing could be more subtle; it was a triumph of equivocation.

Around this combination, which seemed a possible one, many expostulations and even bargainings had taken place in the lobbies, so that it now began to assume extreme importance. Among the Right Centre, a new group had been formed of which the original source was the former Target group, which had been conspicuous for its Liberal energy at the time of the negotiations with the Comte de Chambord, and which, already in June 1874, had taken its stand on the declaration of the dissenting Right Centre and by the speech of the Vicomte d'Haussonville at the time when the electoral Bill was being discussed.[1] The leaders of that group

[1] The first Wallon proposition had been introduced on the 16th June, 1874, at the very moment when the speech of M. d'Haussonville emphasised the rupture between the Moderate Rights and the Extreme Right.

were M. de Montalivet, and, especially, MM. Léonce de Lavergne and Bocher, the latest recruits. The Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier was favourable to it. The Duc de Broglie knew of it. The Duc d'Aumale, the Prince de Joinville, the Comte de Paris himself encouraged it.

The personal action and influence of the Comte de Paris during those memorable days cannot be denied. On the 28th January, the Prince wrote to his Girondin confidant, M. Adrien Léon, a member of the constitutional group: . . . "M. C. . . . is mistaken if he thinks that I do not know what is taking place in the Gironde and elsewhere; I might add many chapters to his letter: but I can do absolutely nothing. I have said it, and I repeat it in vain. If M. de C. has been able to contribute to the appointment of a Préfet during the last six months, he is more fortunate and more influential than I am. That is why I was telling you this morning that *the next Government would be either the declared foe or the accomplice of the Bonapartists, and that, if our friends cannot bring about the first alternative, they must not be associated with the second. . . .*"[1]

It was feared above all things that the successive failures of the Monarchy and of the Republic—in one word, the obvious powerlessness of the Assembly—might profit the Bonapartist cause. The growing boldness of the latter party, its plans and organisation recently exposed, excited and stimulated the Liberalism, otherwise sincere, of the promoters of the movement

This is how things really stood: the group had formed a plan which M. Louis Blanc, in his mistrust, qualified somewhat acidly, in these words: "They wanted a Republic created by the Royalists, that is: a house built by those whom it hindered, in view of its future destruction. . . . M. Vitet had left this dying counsel to

[1] Unpublished private document.

Royalists of every shade: 'Since you cannot prevent the Republic, agree amongst yourselves to appropriate it.'"[1]

Perhaps an even more immediate after-thought was to be found in some minds. "It is said that, at the very moment when those negotiations were taking place, certain members of the Assembly regarded the re-establishment of the Monarchy as possible and perhaps near: they believed that, before this supreme menace, the Comte de Chambord might bring it about by uttering one single word. It would have been enough that the Prince, moved by our danger, should place himself unconditionally at the disposal of the country's representatives. At once, a Royalist majority would have been obtained. Faithful Legitimists, authorised by their age and services, had, it was said, addressed a supreme prayer, a last and pressing appeal to the Prince. But the Prince had not answered."[2]

More loyally and straightforwardly, M. Léonce de Lavergne stated in his letter to the *Temps* that, failing another issue, he would become reconciled to the Republic. He had also declared in another letter to the Press that Universal Suffrage appeared to him as a power opposed to Socialism. M. Wallon, whose proposition was now before the Assembly, could not meet with a more useful ally.

M. Léonce de Lavergne.

M. Léonce de Lavergne was a man of learning and experience who had studied the strength and weakness of revolutions and constitutions. He himself said, justifying his own conduct: "In the Assembly, I had always given the preference to a Constitutional Monarchy; but when it was proved to me that this was impossible, I became reconciled to a Liberal and Conservative Republic."

[1] Louis Blanc, p. 109.

[2] *Les Responsabilités*, Auguste Callet, pp. 36–38.

M. Léonce de Lavergne was, like M. Target, a close friend of M. Guizot; a shade of Protestant Liberalism perhaps mingled with the many reasons which caused his evolution.

Be that as it may, when these men had finally decided to adopt this course, they took every advantage they could from the situation. M. Léonce de Lavergne negotiated with the Left Centre. M. Dufaure, M. Léon Say, M. Bérenger intervened. The Left was represented in these conferences by M. Gambetta and M. Jules Ferry. A compact was debated, accepted and formulated, for, as Louis Blanc puts it (p. 109), it was necessary "to submit humbly to the will of that group, or to see the constitutional majority crumble into dust."

The conditions imposed by the Lavergne group may be summed up in a few words: in exchange for the acknowledgment of a Republican state of things, it was intended to secure the organisation of monarchical institutions. Sacrifices and concessions were to be reciprocal. Circumstances proved to be so weighty that the agreement was actually realised. There was no alternative; facts were stronger than opinions. As Louis Blanc again expresses it, "the Lavergne group held the fortune of France in its hands."

But, that important and powerful group, what was its numerical strength? What would it be worth in a division? The situation was so confused, the uncertainty so general, that only the actual vote would answer that question.

At the opening of the sitting of Saturday the 30th January, the Committee of Thirty announced that it rejected the additional paragraph moved by M. Wallon. M. Henri Wallon ascended the tribune to support his amendment.

M. Henri Wallon.

The physiognomy of the "Father of the Republic" has become legendary: his round, plump face, blue eyes and gentle expression harmonised with his candid soul. He was a most excellent man, full of learning, modesty, patience and piety. A son of the rich and industrious Flemish provinces of France, where practical sense and a measured gravity usually accompany gentle manners and firm principle, he represented the Département du Nord in the Assembly. He owed a certain notoriety to his merits as a distinguished Professor and to some historical works remarkable for their solidity if not by their brilliancy. He was a zealous commentator of the great classics of the seventeenth century, an admirer of Bossuet, and had written a book on Joan of Arc. In spite of his very real claims to notoriety, his personality seemed effaced by many illustrious and eminent men who composed his audience in the Assembly.

He spoke. People did not listen: "The noise of conversations covered his voice," says the official account. He continued. The President was obliged to demand silence: "The speaker is being constantly interrupted and cannot even make himself understood. These interruptions must cease." A word was caught here and there. M. Wallon was forestalling objections: "But, it will be said, you are proclaiming the Republic? Gentlemen, I proclaim nothing. (Exclamations and laughter.) I am taking things as they are. . . ." ("Very good," from the Left. Noise on the Right.) He continued: "But, it will be said, you are nevertheless creating the Republic. To that I simply answer: if the Republic does not suit France, the best way to do away with it is to create it." Bursts of noisy laughter welcomed this phrase. The good man became embarrassed: "Gentlemen, you do not understand my meaning. . . ."

The speech continued amidst intentional irony and indifference.

"In the situation which is at present that of France, we must sacrifice our theories, our personal preference; it is the duty of every good citizen. I will add, though it seems to be supporting a paradox, that it is in the interest of the Monarchical party itself." (Renewed laughter.) "I tell you: constitute the Government which is now established and which is the Government of the Republic. . . ." "The Septennate," shouted the Right. "I do not ask you to make it final," continued the good man. "What is final? But do not call it provisional. Make a Government which has within it germs of life and preservation, but also of transformation, not at a fixed date such as the 20th November, 1880, but whenever the needs of the country may require it, neither sooner nor later. That, gentlemen, is the object of my amendment."

The redeemer of constitutions and of the hatching Republic was certainly not a great orator. However, he said exactly what others were thinking. His intervention answered to the feeling expressed at the end of a sitting by M. de Mérode, a witty man if ever there was one: "How glad we should be to hear one fine day that the Republic was made, on condition that we be not asked to make it!!"

The vote was about to be taken when M. Albert Desjardins, Under-Secretary of State for Public Education, a friend and confidant of the Duc de Broglie, rose to speak. In his own personal name, he said, he moved an addition to M. Wallon's additional paragraph. Those who were in the secret were astonished; what new intrigue was this?

It was a supreme effort from the Right. M. Albert

Desjardins proposed to begin as follows the additional paragraph of M. Wallon:

> At the expiration of the powers conferred to Marshal MacMahon by the Law of the 30th November, 1873, and if no revision of the constitutional laws takes place according to the following clauses . . . :

Desperate Attempt from the Right.

The rest in M. Wallon's words. If this wording were accepted, revision would take precedence over the constitutional work itself. It was an *in extremis* restriction, a prolongation of a temporary state to correct the possibility of a definite one. M. Desjardins gave some obscure explanations. It was reported that the Duc de Broglie wished to remain master of the evolution which he felt to be taking place without him, and to impose his sanction on the vague Republic which was yet in the limbo of the Wallon amendment.

"A certain emotion," says the official account, "succeeded M. Albert Desjardins' speech. Many members rose, and private conversations took place on several benches."

M. Raoul Duval did not mince his words: "The authors of the amendment wish to continue a provisional condition under a new Septennial Presidency *until Providence shall have done away with the obstacle which stands in the way of certain ambitions. . . .*" This was an allusion to the death of the Comte de Chambord, which would, according to the outspoken Deputy, bring this tortuous and persevering work to a close.

The Republic founded.

It would have been surprising if M. Chesnelong had not appeared at this moment. He did not fail to allude to the words of the 27th October and of the 20th November, 1873, which had made him famous. The Monarchy's death agony had taken place before his eyes, almost under his hand; he had, in spite of all, preserved his fine confidence: "Whilst we are

waiting for the Monarchy, do not let us disorganise the great Conservative party by Republican institutions. The Republic can never be parted from the Revolution. The Assembly will not vote for the Republic."

M. Clapier answered M. Chesnelong : it is curious to compare the two. "More now than ever I await the King," said M. Chesnelong.—"Since there is no King, let us found the Republic," said M. Clapier.

M. Clapier exposed, with great lucidity, the disposition of those Monarchists who were evolving towards the Republic : "I acknowledge," said M. Clapier, "that the Monarchy has afforded France years of prosperity and stability. But that was when the political and social condition of France was monarchical. . . . On the whole, we are offered to-day all that we want, save a royal title, of which we ourselves agree that we cannot dispose at the present time. On the other hand, we are accorded the three things which we demand in the name of Conservative interests : the establishment of a Second Chamber, the right of dissolution for the Head of the State, and the possibility of revision. Yesterday, M. Laboulaye asked you, by voting for the Republic, to put down an absolute and general principle. You refused, and rightly so. To-day, M. Wallon puts us in presence of a special, definite, concrete fact. Vote : if, in six years' time, no modification of the Constitution has taken place, it will mean that things are going well, and we need merely continue a successful course."

M. de Ventavon, in the name of the Committee of Thirty, opposed at the same time the Wallon amendment and the Desjardins amendment.

Extreme perplexity was now general ; lost in dark and confused intricacies, men wondered where to look for light and guidance.

Engagements had been entered into during the

conferences which preceded this sitting. Was M. Desjardins' captious formula intended to cause them to be broken? M. Bérenger, an upright man, put the question with his habitual firmness. "An unexpected fact has taken place at the opening of the sitting. An amendment has been introduced that nothing could have led us to expect; this amendment may be devoid of gravity; it may, on the other hand, have considerable importance. . . . I have the honour to demand that the honourable M. Desjardins will kindly make its meaning more precise. If it merely signifies an allusion to *the engagement taken, by the Left as well as by the other political groups in the Assembly*, that a revision clause should be inserted in the Constitution, we will make no objection; *we are men of our word.* If this amendment has another bearing, I ask that it should be clearly stated; and, if it carries with it a modification of the Wallon amendment, that we should be told in what this modification consists."

M. Albert Desjardins answered, but in a more involved manner than before. Finally, he "referred to the Assembly's vote." The Right intended that the Desjardins wording, added to the Wallon proposition, should make one and the same article, which would be dealt with by one and the same vote. A most wily stroke: destruction would be simultaneous with construction. The Wallon motion, correcting the Ventavon clause, would in its turn be corrected by the Desjardins motion. This was the last word in Parliamentary politics. Everything was to revolve on this needle point.[1]

[1] "Our friends on the Right have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. For the last three years, we have been telling them that, by refusing all organisation, they would drag us to the abyss; for the last three months, we have been telling them that, by refusing the impersonal Septennate, they would lead us to a Republican Septennate; nothing has been of any

The Wallon Amendment Voted.

From that moment, President Buffet took a leading part. The question was one of order, and he, as President, was empowered to deal with it. He pronounced in favour of a ballot, refusing to accept the tactics urged upon him by M. de Kerdrel in the name of the Right, and which consisted in including both motions in one sentence. He decided that the Desjardins amendment should be voted separately. This amendment thus lost all its chances: it was rejected by 522 votes against 129.

The effect was such that M. Dufaure, who had reserved himself until then, immediately assumed the direction of the debate. He had abstained from the Desjardins vote, not wishing that he and his friends should appear to be evading the promise they had given to include amongst constitutional laws the facility of revision. This time, he ascended the tribune and spoke out clearly and explicitly. "Together with the honourable M. Wallon and a great number of my friends, I admit perfectly, in the first place, that, by M. Wallon's amendment, we will in no wise infringe upon the powers which were conferred on the 20th November upon the President of the Republic, and, in the second place, that we admit the right of Revision." The compact was publicly ratified. Now there remained but to vote.

The Wallon amendment had once more been modified in the course of the debate. This was its final form—

The President of the Republic shall be elected, by an absolute majority, by the Senate and Chamber of Deputies united in one National Assembly.

He shall be appointed for seven years and capable of re-election.

---

use. And again, the day before yesterday, they nearly rent de Broglie and forsook him when he tried, by means of the Desjardins amendment, to cause the abortion of the Wallon motion. He came within two votes of doing so. But read the speech of M. Chesnelong at that wretched sitting of last Saturday, and admire their blindness."—(Private unpublished letter from the Duc Decazes to M. de Gontaut-Biron.)

After a first count, the President announced that the number of white bulletins and that of blue bulletins seemed to be nearly equal, and that a recount was necessary.

Several incidents took place. A member drew near the Secretaries' desk on the left and placed his bulletin in the ballot-box. General Billot succeeded at the last moment in persuading General de Chabron not to abstain, and received from him a white bulletin which he laid in one of the baskets. . . . Protests from the Right. President Buffet declared that the count not being finished, he considered that late voters might be permitted to record their votes. . . .

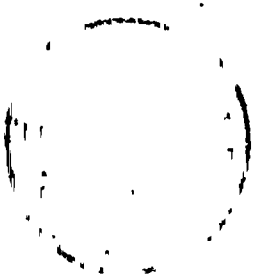
The recount lasted a whole hour; Deputies waited in silence. The Right was "on thorns," writes M. de Vinols. At 6.45 p.m. the result was announced. By 353 votes against 352, the Wallon amendment was adopted. Loud and prolonged applause on the Left Benches.

The Republic was founded—save for a third reading.

The Right had said and repeated again in October, 1873, that a majority of one would be sufficient for the Monarchy to be established. Its members were now caught in their own declarations; they suffered from the rule they had themselves dictated. A majority of one was sufficient to found the Republic.

Now for a few details. All the Lefts, including the five members of the Extreme Left, voted for the amendment. All the Rights, including the Extreme Right, voted against. It was in the Centre that a slight transfer of votes determined the majority.

The Republic which had just been voted was, as has been said, the Republic of the Right Centre. On the preceding day, MM. Clapier, Fourichon, Lèonce de Lavergne, Antonin Lefèvre-Pontalis and Luro had already pronounced for the Laboulaye amendment.



After the painting by Boston Corbett

Henry Wadsworth

On the 30th January, eleven Deputies of the Right Centre and the Left Centre, who had voted against the Laboulaye amendment, pronounced in favour of the Wallon amendment; they were: MM. Adrien Léon, Amédée Beau, General de Chabron, Delacour, Drouin, Gouin, Vicomte d'Haussonville, Houssard, Savary, Comte de Ségur, Félix Voisin. Seven Deputies who had abstained at the Laboulaye division voted for the Wallon amendment: MM. Bernard, Desbons, Ducuing, Duvergier de Hauranne, Guinard, Paul Morin, Target. Six Deputies who had voted against the Laboulaye amendment abstained at the Wallon vote: MM. Bompard, Deseilligny, de la Sicotière, Laurent, Mallevergne, Mathieu-Bodet (Minister of Finance). The Comte de Chambrun, who had abstained, voted against, and M. Ganault, who had voted for, is erroneously mentioned as having abstained.[1]

Respecting the causes and the consequences of this vote, we have the opinion of two equally eminent men in different parties: the Duc de Broglie, and M. Léon Say. "It was after a long period of waiting," says the former, "that a small section of the Monarchical majority—fearing (and not without reason) the disorder which might arise if the Assembly was obliged to retire and to acknowledge its powerlessness, distrustful of the advantages which might be given them by Revolutionary passions, stimulated by that acknowledgment—thought that it would be possible, without accepting the Republican principle, to

[1] It has been related since that M. Mallevergne, of the Right Centre, being slightly indisposed, was away at the time when the ballot took place. M. Pierre Charreyron has kindly sent the following communication: "My father, M. Charreyron, was usually entrusted with M. Mallevergne's bulletins; having received on this occasion no precise instructions, would not take the responsibility of voting for his colleague. . . . M. Mallevergne returned to the Assembly after the ballot was over and the principle of the Republic proclaimed. In fact, he would certainly have voted against. . . ."

let it become established in fact, but together with an express condition and reservation: that was, that every facility be reserved to France to get free from it on the day when the re-establishment of the Monarchy, having become once more possible, would be agreeable to national wishes. It was on that clearly defined ground that an understanding was established between that detached group of the Monarchist party and the principal personalities of the Republican minority."

Thus, in the very resignation of the Duc de Broglie, there still remained confidence and illusion. The Duke forgot his own witty words of the 24th May: "Victory always makes some prisoners."

The leaders of the Left better appreciated the consequences of the sitting of the 30th January. M. Léon Say wrote on the 1st February, 1875, to his uncle, M. Cheuvreux: "We are in full political evolution. The carrying by one vote of the Wallon amendment will produce some astonishing results, and we can already count upon a majority of about sixty votes for the whole of a Bill which, introduced under Anti-Republican colours, will be passed under a distinctly Republican character. The first man to whom I spoke at the time when that majority of one was announced, was the Prince de Joinville. He said to me: 'You have won, and I am delighted: my personal situation forced me to vote in the negative, but I am delighted to be beaten.' Pasquier has told me that he and his friends completely accepted the new ground created by the majority of one. It is therefore probable that the Constitutional law will be passed. M. de Broglie consoles himself by saying that we must not draw logical conclusions from the fact; but he is under a strange delusion, and his friends are beginning to take up quite another tone. . . . 'They always told us to follow them once more,' said M. de

Meaux, speaking of the leaders of the Right, and, after each blunder, we could only say to them that blundering once had not prevented us from blundering again."[1]

The Republicans bore their triumph with modesty. They knew that the last pass had yet to be crossed. Still, they could not altogether conceal their satisfaction. M. de Vinols relates that he met M. Gambetta at the Montparnasse station on the day when the Laboulaye amendment was rejected: "I was surprised to see him there, as he generally went by St. Lazare. I was struck by his dejection. . . . I met Gambetta again at Montparnasse on the day when the Wallon amendment was voted; he was beside himself with joy, and very unlike the Gambetta of the previous day."[2]

IV

The Republic was voted by a majority of one, that is, the name of the system was introduced into the Constitutional plans of the Right. Yet, the Bill which was now the subject of the Assembly's discussions was still the Ventavon Bill. This Bill had been prepared in view of a personal Government, if not of a Parliamentary Monarchy. Through what transformations, what distortions would it have to pass before it could be adapted to a Democratic Republic?

At the sitting of Monday the 1st February, Clause III. of the Bill was touched upon.

The Marshal-President of the Republic shall have the right to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies; in that case a new Chamber shall be elected within a period of six months.

---

[1] Georges Michel, *Léon Say*, p. 232.

[2] Baron de Vinols, p. 239.

Another Wallon Amendment.

M. Wallon at this point came again to the front of the stage; he was getting used to his part. Success had given him assurance and prestige; people listened to him, now. Without lingering on details of wording concerning the functions of the President of the Republic, he proposed to sanction, by a new amendment, the agreement which had taken place between the groups of the Centre on a most delicate point: the right of Dissolution. The new amendment ran thus:

He (the President of the Republic) shall moreover, subject to the Senate's assent, be entitled to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies before the legal expiration of his term of office.

In this case, new elections shall take place within a period of three months.

The Ventavon Bill gave to the President *alone* a right of dissolution; the Wallon amendment gave it also to the President, but *subject to the Senate's assent.*

The Monarchical doctrine had, as a necessary corollary, the right of Dissolution vested in the Crown. The Republican system, leaving the last word with the Chamber, would have refused the right of Dissolution to the President, he being but the emanation of the Assembly of Representatives. Here again, M. Wallon's offer meant a compromise.

M. Dufaure asked that it be referred back to the Committee. The Committee of Thirty had been surprised by the carrying of the Wallon amendment, which changed the character of the Bill and substituted a general Bill organising public powers to a Bill dealing with the powers of one person. The Committee should have an opportunity of examining the new situation. This was agreed to, and the debate postponed to the next day, 2nd February.

The Right attached extreme importance to this clause. It was the last fragment of monarchical institutions which was being torn up before its eyes. The Committee, urged

by M. de Meaux, pronounced once more against the Wallon amendment. They wished to "give the Marshal more prestige and independence."[1]

In the Assembly, a member of the Left Centre, M. Bertauld, supported the Republican doctrine in this form: the right of dissolution should be given, once, to the Marshal alone, on account of his exceptional position and of the promises made, but not to his successors, "that right being radically incompatible with Republican principles."

One of the members of the dissenting Right Centre, M. Luro, expressed himself as follows about the evolution accomplished by himself and his friends: "However much we may regret not being able to endow the country with the institutions that we prefer, we must bravely make up our minds. Between those who want the organisation to be more Republican than Monarchical and those who want it to be more Monarchical than Republican, we must content ourselves with the best thing we can get. Now, only one solution is possible, the Republic. My friends and I wished to open to the Conservative party access to the only ground on which a Government could be organised. And we are confident that, if this course were adopted by our friends on the Right, the Republic would not become a party Government."

No wiser words were uttered in the course of this long debate; if they had been listened to at that moment when the Republic was born, a compact would have been sanctioned, uniting all Frenchmen in bonds of unity and concord. But, alas! political parties are imprudent and forgetful.

M. de Meaux cleverly dwelt upon M. Bertauld's proposition to reserve for the President alone the right of

[1] Vicomte de Meaux, p. 247.

dissolution. "The Senate cannot be the judge of the future Chamber. That right belongs to the Executive Power alone; if not, faced by this disarmed power and by a Second Chamber inevitably powerless, the Chamber, born of Universal Suffrage, will become a veritable Convention."

M. Dufaure was the real leader of the debate. As soon as he stood at the tribune, the Assembly paused, hanging on his words. Solutions were expected from him. He already appeared as the Minister who was soon to put into practice the system of which he advised the creation. "People seem to think," said he, "that the Chambers are always turbulent and the Executive Power always wise. They forget the teachings of history. The Senate is an arbiter, a balancing element. That is the part it will have to play, a part which it is well not to exaggerate or to diminish. . . . I ardently wish that the Bill which is before you, and of which you have accepted two clauses, may be voted in its entirety. It is necessary that it should, for the tranquillity of our country; the Government is unnerved, authority weakened. We are surrounded with intrigues of the most audacious character" . . . (this was the tender point): "the new amendment has the double effect of giving to some of us a guarantee born of the Presidential power, and to the others that which is secured by the Senate."

That speech, says the official account, caused great agitation in every part of the Assembly. Private conversations became so loud and so general, that for ten minutes the Reporter, who was at the tribune, could not speak on account of the noise.

Confirmation of the Republic.

For now, the question was to sanction, or to abolish—and this time after some reflection and not by surprise—the vote which, by a *majority of one*, had established the Republic. "This second

ballot," says M. de Vinols, "was at the same time the confirmation of the Republic and the condemnation of the personal Septennate."

M. Bertauld withdrew his amendment. Taken up again by M. Depeyre, it was rejected by 354 votes against 346. The Wallon amendment was immediately adopted by 425 votes against 243.

And then, a strange thing happened. Members of the Moderate Right, the founders of the Septennate, men who had for nearly two years held almost everything in suspense in order to make Marshal MacMahon master of the situation and so create in his favour a sort of temporary Principate above the Assembly—those same men joined the new majority and sanctioned the new constitutional decision which destroyed their work, annulled their efforts, and deleted many solemn declarations and eloquent speeches.

The Prince de Joinville, the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier, the Duc Decazes and the Duc de Broglie himself voted for the amendment. Amongst those who did not vote were M. de Vogüé, M. de Bonald, M. de Chabrol, M. de Chabaud La Tour, and MM. de Lacombe and de Meaux, who had spoken in support of the Committee's Bill!

M. de Vinols says: "This vote can only be explained by instructions to constitute the Republic, given in the hope of making the Duc d'Aumale the successor of Marshal MacMahon."[1] It was also said that the Duc de Broglie wished to embark upon the new ship, now that it was afloat, and to become its pilot. However this may have been, the force of circumstances and the latent authority of universal suffrage were carrying the day; the Rights, made aware of their impotence, relaxed their efforts and capitulated.

[1] P. 243.

The Committee itself, the citadel of the Septennate, gave up its arms on the 3rd February. Clause III., now Clause IV. of the Ventavon Bill, ran as follows:

The Cabinet as a whole is responsible to the Chamber for the general policy of the Government, and individual Ministers for their personal actions.

Marshal MacMahon, President of the Republic, is only responsible in case of high treason.

Now, in the stead of M. de Ventavon, indisposed, M. Paris, temporary Reporter, said that the Committee agreed to the suppression of the words, "Marshal MacMahon." "It is a deposition," cried the Right. It meant impersonal authority. The Presidency of Marshal MacMahon became part of the Constitution instead of being a constitution in itself. The clause was voted by a show of hands.

Clause V. dealt with the mode of election of the President of the Republic and established the principle of Revision. On M. Wallon's suggestion, the clause was divided into two paragraphs. Clause V. in its new form was carried without a debate:

In case of a vacancy through death or any other cause, the two Chambers, united, shall immediately proceed to the election of a new President.

During the interval, the Executive power is vested in the Council of Ministers.

Clause VI. dealt with the right of revision; this was the knot of the agreement which had taken place between the two Centres, and which enabled the debate to progress with a rapidity which might well disconcert unprepared adversaries.

M. Paul Cottin asked the Reporter whether it was well understood that the Revision clause inserted in the Constitution implied the right—a highly revolutionary one—*of changing, at a given moment, the form of Government.*

Right of Revision.

Never had the founders of a *régime* been submitted to such a condition. M. Paris, the Reporter, was only too pleased to answer distinctly in the affirmative: "Yes, yes, the text leaves room for no manner of doubt; we understand absolutely that all the constitutional laws, taken as a whole, can be modified; that the form, even, of the Government may become the object of a revision. There must be, there can be, no equivocation on that point." And, as he came down from the tribune, he turned to M. Dufaure: "That is what you wanted, is it not? You are quite satisfied?" That was, in effect, what had been promised. The compact was concluded; now for the vote.

M. Gambetta, however, could not resist the impulse which led him to the tribune. He wished to explain, to interpret matters. But he suddenly stopped short, and kept himself in reserve for the third reading. "In truth," writes M. de Broglie, "M. Gambetta seemed embarrassed. He made a few reservations, and announced that he would develop them at the next discussion; but, when the day of the final debate came, he remained silent. . . . He was wise to do so, and his silence was another proof of the political sense which distinguished him. . . . Only, his hesitation explains why the Republicans did not care to give to the debate on the Bill as a whole more extent and more breadth."[1]

Votes by a show of hands continued to follow each other in rapid succession. Clause VI. read thus:

The Chambers shall have the right—by separate motions, carried in either Chamber by an absolute majority of votes, either spontaneously or at the request of the President of the Republic—to declare that the Constitutional Laws should be revised.

After this resolution shall have been passed by each Chamber, the two will join in one National Assembly in order to proceed to the Revision.

[1] Duc de Broglie, *Histoire et Politique*, p. 37.

The resolutions implying a revision in the whole or in part of the Constitutional Laws shall be carried by an absolute majority of the members composing the National Assembly.

However, during the term of authority conferred upon Marshal MacMahon by the Law of the 20th November, 1873, this revision can only take place on the proposition of the President of the Republic.

The Left had not yet drained the cup. An amendment by the Baron de Ravinel, taken up by M. Giraud, formed a new Clause VII. and introduced into the text a provision which bore but a distant relationship to the Constitutional Laws. "The seat of the Executive and of the two Chambers shall be at Versailles." This showed, as M. Louis Blanc said, an injurious distrust of Paris. The clause was passed, the dissenting Right Centre having failed and voting with the Rights. Members closed their eyes and rushed to a finish.

Another additional clause (Clause VIII.) was also carried, directing that the law on public powers should only be promulgated after the final vote on the Senate Bill.

By 508 votes against 174, the Assembly decided in favour of a third reading; it then adjourned until the 11th February, when the second reading of the Senate Bill was to take place.

The two Bills were now connected with each other, and could practically be said to compose the whole of the Constitution. Thus, stone upon stone, rose the Constitution, a Republican one.

Parliamentary procedure, with its three debates, rendered this work singularly complicated: at each fresh debate every word of every clause was again put in question.

The Senate Bill.

The Senate, as conceived by the Committee, was to be a moderating agent, a brake; it was to represent traditions and interests; here are the very words of M. Antonin Lefèvre-Pontalis, Reporter of the

Bill: "We wish to oppose to the revolutionary party a barrier which will be sufficient to prevent it from legally laying hands on the Executive power." Understood thus, the institution of the Second Chamber seemed an act of distrust of the suffrage.

The first clause proposed by the Committee clearly expressed the desire of the Right to survive itself through the institution of a Senate:

CLAUSE I. The Senate shall be composed—
1. Of Senators by right.
2. Of Senators appointed by a decree of the President of the Republic.
3. Of Senators elected by the Departments and Colonies.
The Senate shall not include more than three hundred members.

M. Pascal Duprat moved an amendment: "The Senate shall be an elective body. Its members shall be elected by the same electors as the Chamber of Deputies."

This is a Republican doctrine, and France now has no aristocracy, no privileged class, said M. Pascal Duprat. It is a purely democratic country. It has no sovereign authority but the will of all. An institution which did not emanate from popular suffrage would have no weight or would only be a disturbing element. A Democratic State cannot have Senators by right. Political and ethical reasons are against the appointment of Senators by the Executive power; the head of the State, elected for seven years, cannot logically make Life Senators. On the other hand, the categories of electors created by the Committee's Bill are purely arbitrary; this means illogical inconsistency and disorder, and especially the mutilation and vain contradiction of Universal Suffrage.

M. Pascal Duprat concluded: "I can, therefore, without hesitation, move the amendment which I have suggested. It is in conformity with your recent vote. You have begun to organise the Republic; complete your work by giving to the Republic a Republican Senate.

That is what is demanded, to my thinking, by common sense, logic, and patriotism."

No Republican, however moderate, could disown this theory. M. Jules Simon's "never, never," will be remembered. M. Laboulaye, in the *Esquisse d'une Constitution Républicaine*—which he had already published in 1872, and of which the outlines on the whole were to be found in the Wallon motion—had demanded that the Senate be elected by Universal Suffrage: "In order that the Senate should prove a counterweight to the other Chamber, its origin must necessarily be no less popular, otherwise it will not be adopted by general opinion; instead of being a source of strength, it will be a source of weakness and of embarrassment. I should, therefore, not hesitate to make the Senators be elected by Universal Suffrage." The only attenuation M. Laboulaye would bring to this radical system was to add to the Senators elected by the Departments a certain number of members specially representing Agriculture, Industry, Commerce, the Army, the Law, Science and Art: an act of courtesy towards corporate bodies and acquired positions which was quite devoid of importance.

Therefore, from the moment when the principle of a Second Chamber was accepted and "the question was no longer untouched," as M. Pascal Duprat remarked, the latter voiced the sentiments of the whole party when he proposed that the Senate be appointed by the same electors as the Chamber of Deputies.

There was no discussion, but a vote by show of hands was declared doubtful. Much excitement prevailed.

The Pascal Duprat Amendment.

Some of the members thought of nothing but the triumph of their own ideas; others feared the peril which threatened the Republican edifice so painfully built, in case one of the conditions of the compact should not be realised. Would

the dissenting Right Centre accept the principle of a Senate elected by Universal Suffrage?

Another attempt to vote by show of hands had but a doubtful result. After a public ballot, a recount was necessary. . . . A long interval of waiting. . . . Then the result was proclaimed. By 322 votes against 310, the Assembly adopted the Pascal Duprat amendment. "The adoption of the amendment was received by the Republicans with acclamations," says M. Louis Blanc.

The dissenting Right Centre had voted against, and also a portion of the Left Centre. But the Bonapartists had voted for the amendment, and the Extreme Right group, feeling that the opportunity was a good one to muddle everything and set everything in question again, had not voted.

M. Batbie demanded that the Bill—"of which there is not much left," as he mournfully said—should be referred back to the Committee. The Reporter, M. de Ventavon, had collapsed. The Chairman, a more robust man, still held his ground, but in a depressed fashion. The Bill was referred back.

On the next Friday, 12th February, the last word was said by M. Antonin Lefèvre-Pontalis: "The system of the amendment is irreconcilable with the Committee's doctrines. As long as this amendment remains the principle of the Bill, the Committee does not feel it a duty to participate in the debate; later on, the course of the Committee will depend on circumstances."

Suddenly, the Cabinet awoke from its slumbers in order to transmit to the Assembly the expressions of the Marshal-President.

"Gentlemen," said General de Cissey, "the President of the Republic has not thought it well to authorise us to intervene in the course of the discussion. It seemed to him, in effect, that your last vote altered the nature of

the institution concerning which you are called upon to legislate, and thus took away from the Constitutional laws as a whole a character which they cannot lose without compromising Conservative interests. The Government, who cannot forego the defence of those interests, can therefore not be associated with the resolutions carried at your last sitting. We think it well to inform you of the fact before those resolutions become final."

M. Charreyron, in the name of the dissenting Right Centre, made a discouraged and discouraging declaration. The compact was broken; those who had not known how to respect it only had themselves to blame.

The Right Centre tried to withdraw from its position. Extreme confusion reigned. MM. Laboulaye, Bardoux, Bérenger moved conciliatory amendments. But there was now no Committee, no method. An amendment by M. Bardoux, stipulating that Senatorial Elections shall take place by "scrutin de liste" was passed, and the clause as a whole, including the Pascal Duprat and Bardoux amendments, was adopted by 366 votes against 235.

The other clauses were also carried by a show of hands. The Senate was now instituted, its members to be elected by Universal Suffrage, in one list for each Department.

Now there remained but to vote for a third reading of the Bill as a whole.

The Senate Bill is Rejected.

According to regulations, this vote was to take place by public ballot. Now the Lefts were to have their chance. But, at that moment, the Extreme Right turned. By 368 votes against 345, the Assembly decided *not to pass to a third reading.*

Everything was overboard; no Senate, no Constitution. The young Republic was still-born, the Assembly was "bankrupt."

Dissolution Proposed.

These contradictory votes were followed by a breathless and passionate discussion. M. Henri Brisson immediately moved a proposition of Dissolution and demanded urgency. MM. Waddington, Vautrain, etc., anxious for conciliation, proposed to the Assembly various systems for the organisation of the Senate. "We know all that," cried the audience. M. Raoul Duval, in vehement terms, supported Dissolution. To declare solemnly that Constitutional laws will be voted does not suffice to make them be voted. . . . Do not let us prolong this sight of an Assembly which for two years has failed to vote the laws it is always promising. . . . Let us give way to the country, let us give place to another Assembly. . . . The worst of all would be to persevere in keeping our country in the political condition in which we ourselves are."

M. Victor Lefranc uttered a few wise words: "Do not let us despair; let us take up our work again with a feeling of patriotism and resignation . . . let us save our country, if need be, through the sacrifice of our own opinions." He was not followed. M. Bethmont, a member of the Left Centre, and a friend of M. Thiers, supported the motion of Dissolution. "There is now no Government, no Assembly, nobody responsible; let us go."

An animated duel took place between M. Gambetta and the most eminent personality in the Cabinet, hitherto standing in the shade, the Duc Decazes. The latter opposed the proposition, in the name of the Government, and M. Gambetta interrupted him: "In the name of a Cabinet six times beaten and still present." The Duc Decazes insisted that the Assembly should not separate without having completed its work and executed the engagement undertaken to endow the country with some institutions.

M. Gambetta answered: "It was you, yourselves, who a moment ago uttered those words of discord which placed everything once more in question. . . . That principle of a Senate which you hold so dear, we voted it; we followed you wherever it pleased you to lead us; we silenced our scruples. We consented to divide the power, to create two Chambers; we consented to give you the strongest Executive power which ever was constituted in a democratic country; we have given you the right of dissolution, and over whom? Over the nation herself, on the morrow of the day when she will have given her verdict. We have given you the right of revision; we have given you everything, left everything in your hands! And why? because we trusted in your sincerity . . . and, when we had given you all that apparatus, all that protective system, three times walled in, in which you could shelter the Government and the doctrines of your choice—you came, you, a six times beaten and ever-persisting Ministry, to tell us that you must have a Senate exclusively your own. . . . This Cabinet, devoid of responsibility, ran to the Marshal and came back with the declaration that we have heard. . . . Well, all that must now end. It is necessary that we should cure that disease, now of two years' standing, which makes us fail in all our enterprises one after another. . . . Since it is so, let us go to the country; experiment with your illusions; disappointment will not be long in coming. Later, you will be told that you have missed the only opportunity, perhaps, of founding a really firm, legal, and moderate Republic."

It was in the course of this masterly improvisation that M. Gambetta made that cutting allusion to the foreign politics of the Duc Decazes: "Your foreign policy is no better than your home policy, as I will prove to you."

For Gambetta's mind embraced the whole of the

political chess-board. With all his vehemence, he did not go beyond his object. While he demanded Dissolution, while he insisted for an elective Senate, the leader of the Republican party threatened the Right and, at the same time, sheltered himself on the Left. He negotiated while he raved. General de Chabaud La Tour, in his answer to Gambetta, showed at the same time firmness and prudence. The atmosphere became calmer.

By 390 votes against 257, the Assembly rejected the declaration of urgency on the Dissolution motion proposed by M. Henri Brisson.

Members wished to meet again, to reflect. The proof of this is that, on President Buffet's suggestion, various conciliatory motions, notably those of MM. Waddington and Vautrain, were referred back to the Committee of Thirty.

M. Wallon proposed that the Chamber should adjourn until the 15th February, it being understood that only then should the question of the Senate be settled. This was carried; it seemed as if the Assembly hesitated before the consequences of this incoherent sitting.

V

The Assembly was now on the eve of the supreme decision. But all was still in suspense: on the one hand, declarations, doctrines, a great past; on the other, a vote already passed, the obvious will of the country, the future. Men stood at the cross-roads of Fate.

Every one was warned; there was now no possibility of surprise, real or pretended; what was to be done was to be done with full knowledge of the case. The hour had come to choose between concessions and

obstinacy, between playing for safety and running certain risks.

Already on the 11th, the Left Centre, made aware of the peril by the vote of the Pascal Duprat amendment, had attempted to intervene. Its members had informed the dissenting Right Centre that they were willing to establish a conciliatory combination on the mode of election of the Senate. But the Wallon group had refused to hear anything. "It was too late." The speech of M. Charreyron, at the sitting of the 12th, had been the expression of that state of mind, and that afternoon had seen the compact broken and the Bill rejected.

The conciliators set to work again. But the adversaries of any understanding were equally active and working with no less ardour.

Instigated by M. Méplain, several members of the Colbert meeting, MM. de Montlaur, Leurent, Lallié, Depasse, Adenet, des Rotours, Malartie, etc., then signed a project inviting the Marshal to constitute a new Cabinet based on the 24th May majority, *including the Bonapartists*, and with the following programme: Withdrawal of the Constitutional Bills, organisation of the Marshal's personal powers (right of veto, right of dissolving the next Assembly); partial renewal (that is to say, the survival of the Assembly); a political direction on frankly Monarchical lines.

In effect, a Parliamentary *Coup d'État*, of which the Marshal should be the instrument.

This project was submitted to Marshal MacMahon. His good sense, which had come to his rescue in other no less serious circumstances, assisted him once more: he answered "that he did not despair of seeing an accord take place in the Assembly for the institution of a Senate, and that, in any case, he did not see that there was any reason to withdraw the Constitutional laws."

The Duc de Broglie sent for.

However, the Cabinet, discomfited after the Decazes-Gambetta quarrel, wished to resign. The Marshal sent for the Duc de Broglie. Early on the 13th, a conference took place between the Duc de Broglie, the Duc Decazes, and M. Léon Renault, Prefect of Police. The Duc Decazes and M. Léon Renault energetically refused to enter into any combination in which Bonapartist elements were admitted.

This was the dilemma, as the Comte de Paris had put it: either, with the Bonapartes, rupture and a *Coup d'État*, or, without and against them, the Constitutional laws, and an understanding with the Republican party.

The inquiry concerning the Nièvre election had left real uneasiness in the minds of the Liberal Right. The Prefect of Police, M. Léon Renault, affirmed that there had been a plot. The existence of the Imperialist Committee had been proved in spite of the embarrassed denials of M. Rouher. A propaganda spread through the Army and State officials, and tried to pervade the working classes. It was whispered that, around the Élysée, thanks to military *camaraderie*, it had reached, if not the Marshal himself, at least his *entourage*.

M. Léon Say wrote: "The military plot seems to be thickening. It is said that Generals Abbatucci and d'Espeuilles, assisted by four Colonels, hold the Nancy Army Corps in their hands, and have decided upon the village by which Napoleon IV is to enter." In a word, Parliamentary souls were perturbed, and this perturbation was perhaps more due to their own vacillations than to the reality of facts.

It was at that critical moment, after the Duc Decazes and M. Léon Renault had spoken, that the Duc de Broglie, consulted by the Marshal, had to give his

opinion. The leader of the Rights declared that "the work of the Constitutional laws should not be abandoned."

This simple word took all chances away from the Méplain combination. By taking such a decided course the Duc de Broglie merely conformed to the sentiments, and probably the instructions, of the Comte de Paris. The latter, faithful to a feeling which never left him, wrote a few weeks later (14th April) to M. Adrien Léon: "From a Parliamentary point of view, the Liberal Constitutional party, whose right and duty it is to defend the organic laws by which we are ruled at present, may have a serious influence on the attitude of the Government. *An alliance, a compromise with the true Bonapartists, is out of the question.*" And, later (7th May): "The description which you give me of the advances made to the Bonapartist party in the Department of the Gironde, seems very strange after the vote of the Constitutional laws."

The Duc de Broglie declined the offer made to him of forming a Cabinet, and he advised the President to send for M. Buffet. The part taken by M. Buffet in the vote of the Constitution was too notorious for the least doubt to be entertained as to the meaning of this indication. It was a well-known fact that M. Buffet wished to organise Republican institutions. It was even said that he was inclined to give way concerning the appointment of Life Senators by the Marshal, if the Left consented to forego the election of Senators by Universal Suffrage. The Right accepted and acknowledged its defeat.

Everything therefore depended solely on Marshal MacMahon. On the one hand, the Cabinet question was open and he had to solve it; on the other hand, if he insisted on the right of appointing a certain number of Senators, accorded to him by the Ventavon Bill, an agreement became impossible. The Lefts would never

give in. Perhaps, at the very utmost, they might give up the election of the Second Chamber by Universal Suffrage, but they would certainly go no farther. The appointment of the members of the Higher Chamber by the Head of the Executive was a royal prerogative, incompatible with a Democratic and Republican *régime*, in which the last word should belong to Universal Suffrage. A line had to be drawn somewhere, and here was the spot.

Marshal MacMahon had very formally claimed this right in his repeated Messages to the Chamber. He was bound; bound to himself, to the Assembly, and to his friends. The Moderate Right, which had some reason to expect the greater number of the seats of which the President might dispose, would only accept one or other of the suggested compromises — all of which deprived its members of this great advantage—if practically instructed to do so by the Marshal.

Of those compromises, those which met with the greatest favour emanated from MM. Waddington, Vautrain, Cézanne, and Bérenger. In principle, they admitted the election of the Senators by representatives of the *Communes* and Departments. Besides, the seventy-five Senators who, according to the Ventavon Bill, were to be appointed by the President, were now to be elected by the National Assembly itself. The various groups discussed these various projects. But days passed, and nothing was done.

The partisans of the Méplain trick intended to profit by these delays; they became excited and decided to carry the situation by a master-stroke. M. Buffet, whom circumstances had placed at the head of the party of conciliation, seemed to them a suitable target. At the sitting of the 16th February, Admiral Saisset addressed a direct question to the President of the

Assembly. "I desire to know whether the President of the Assembly violated Clauses 70 and 22 of the Regulations when he allowed, on Friday the 12th, the Waddington and Vautrain motions to be referred back to the Committee of Thirty?" Clause 70 runs thus: "If, after three debates, a Bill is rejected, it cannot be introduced again under a delay of three months." This meant that the group considered that the Constitutional Bills were, by right, withdrawn, and that the adjournment of the debate was against the Regulations and due to a bias in the President's mind.

M. Buffet, thus attacked, answered with great firmness that neither of the resolutions moved being, in their wording nor in their bearing, "the same" as the rejected Bill, the President, and at any rate, the Assembly, had a right of appreciation, and that, in consequence, neither the one nor the other was bound by the Regulations.

"Then," asked M. de Belcastel, "there will be three readings of the new Bill?"

"Of course," answered the President, "there will be three readings, *unless the Assembly should declare that there be urgency.*"

The procedure which, if necessary, would enable the Assembly to free itself from the vote passed on the 12th, was indicated in this short dialogue. President Buffet, after Marshal MacMahon and the Duc de Broglie, refused all compromise with the partisans of a break-neck policy.

Even the Committee of Thirty, in spite of the opposition of M. de Kerdrel and of M. Chesnelong, pronounced against the Méplain resolution.

The ground was therefore a promising one; yet, the conditions of an understanding were not taking shape; negotiations dragged wearily on. It was now Wednesday, the 17th February. The Senate Bill

remained in suspense: the question of the appointment by the Marshal-President of a certain number of Senators remained the stumbling-block.

In the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, on the left-hand side looking towards the Arc de Triomphe, stood two handsome private houses exactly alike, built in Louis XIII style, with high slate roofs, and surrounded by beautiful gardens behind iron gates. They were called the Fontenilliat Pavilions.

In those twin mansions lived the two brothers-in-law, the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier on the right hand, M. Casimir-Perier on the left: there, the supreme debate was to take place and the ultimate difficulty to be solved.

"On Wednesday, the 17th, at seven o'clock in the evening," writes M. Léon Say, "M. Casimir-Perier was informed by his brother-in-law, the Duc Pasquier, that the delegates of the Wallon group and of the Right Centre were to meet at his house and desired us to confer with them." Immediately, M. Casimir-Perier telegraphed to MM. Corne, Ricard, Bardoux, Bethmont, Christophle and Léon Say. A first conversation took place on the Wednesday evening. M. de Ségur announced that the Wallon group had a suggestion to make, as follows: 175 Senators appointed by a meeting of General and *arrondissement* Councillors and delegates from the *Communes* (two per Department, three for Algeria and the Colonies), and the 75 others by the President; 250 Senators in all.

The next day, Thursday, the 18th, at nine o'clock in the morning, a conference took place at M. Casimir-Perier's, between the delegates of the Lefts, who agreed to demand: (1) a larger number of Senators by distributing fifty more among the most thickly populated

Departments; (2) the appointment of the 75 Life members, not by the President, but by the Assembly; (3) a greater number of delegates, from the most thickly populated *Communes*.

This having been agreed upon, the Perier group adjourned to the next house, where the Pasquier group awaited them.

"We crossed the yard like a funeral procession," writes M. Léon Say, "the two brothers-in-law being the heads of the two armies. At M. Pasquier's, we found Bocher and Callet, who are pure Right Centre, and also Buisson, the caricaturist member, and Wallon's friends, de Ségur, d'Haussonville and Target."

Long confabulations followed. The crux of the debate remained the appointment of 75 Senators by the President or by the Assembly, *i. e.* by the Legislative or the Executive Power—a Monarchy or a Republic. The President and the Right had to decide before four o'clock, for the Left Centre was called for that time, and, if no agreement supervened, everything would be lost.

This ultimatum having been stated, the Perier group crossed the yard once more and returned to the other mansion. "And we lunched," adds M. Léon Say, "for Nature never forgets her rights."

M. Dufaure having arrived, he was told what had passed, and went off to Versailles where the Committee of Thirty was sitting.

At dessert, the Duc Pasquier came in. . . . He announced that the Duc Decazes and General Chabaud La Tour had consented to ask the Marshal himself to give way, at a Council of the Cabinet which was sitting in Paris at that very moment. Good M. Wallon had come with his usual *empressement* to draw up the Bill. He was assisted by M. Ricard, who was, during the

whole of the crisis, one of the most active members of the Left.

At three o'clock, the two brothers-in-law drove off to the Place Beauvau, for news.

The Council had been very short. The Marshal had given way, not without sadness, but with a good grace.

The news was telegraphed to Versailles.

The Left Centre was holding a meeting in Paris, Salle Nadar, where the Bill was unanimously adopted. M. Wallon took the draft to be printed in order to have it to distribute on the next day, Friday, the 19th.

At the same hour, the Right Centre assembled at the house of its President, M. Bocher. M. Target was there. The Wallon draft was read. M. Méplain's friends made a supreme appeal for resistance. But they were opposed by the Duc de Broglie himself: "You want to place the Marshal, with no other weapon than his right of veto, face to face with the country, with the future single Chamber which will necessarily be called if the National Assembly does not succeed. Folly! What will be the end of such a policy? perhaps a civil war. Therefore, it is far better to accept the Wallon Bill! . . ."

The Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier was equally emphatic. The group adopted the Wallon Bill.

The next day, Friday, the 19th, the text of the Bill was distributed to the Deputies; it ran thus:

CLAUSE I.—The Senate shall be composed of 300 members; 225 shall be elected by the Departments and Colonies, and 75 by the National Assembly.

CLAUSE II.—The Departments of the Seine and of the Nord shall each elect five Senators.

Seine-Inférieure, Pas-de-Calais, Gironde, Rhône, Finistère, Côtes-du-Nord, each four Senators.

Loire-Inférieure, Saône-et-Loire, Ille-et-Vilaine, Seine-et-Oise, Isère, Puy-de-Dôme, Somme, Bouches-du-Rhône, Aisne, Loire, Manche, Maine-et-

Loire, Morbihan, Dordogne, Haute-Garonne, Charente-Inférieure, Calvados, Sarthe, Hérault, Basses-Pyrénées, Gard, Aveyron, Vendée, Orne, Oise, Vosges, Allier, each three Senators.

All the other Departments, each two Senators.

The arrondissement of Belfort, the three Departments of Algeria, the four colonies of Martinique, Guadalupe, the Réunion Islands, and the French Indies, each one Senator.

CLAUSE III.—The Senators for the Departments and Colonies shall be elected by an absolute majority, and, where it is convenient, by lists, by a meeting held at the principal town of the Department or Colony and composed of:

(1) The local Deputies.
(2) The General Councillors.
(3) The Arrondissement Councillors.
(4) Delegates, one for each Municipal Council, elected from among the electors of the *Commune*.

CLAUSE IV.—The Senators elected by the Assembly shall be elected by the *scrutin de liste*, by an absolute majority.

CLAUSE V.—The Senators elected by the Departments and Colonies shall be elected for nine years, one-third to be elected again every three years. At the beginning of the first Session, the Departments will be divided into three series, each including an equal number of Senators. The series which are to be re-elected at the end of the first and of the second triennial periods, shall be decided by lots.

CLAUSE VI.—The Senators elected by the Assembly shall be elected for life. In case of death, resignation, or any other cause, the Senate itself shall elect a successor within two months.

CLAUSE VII.—The Senate shall, concurrently with the Chamber of Deputies, be entrusted with originating and formulating laws. However, Finance laws shall first of all be introduced and passed by the Chamber of Deputies.

CLAUSE VIII.—The Senate may be constituted as a Court of Justice, to try either the President of the Republic or the Ministers, and to have cognisance of attempts against the safety of the State.

CLAUSE IX.—The election of the Senate shall take place one month before the time fixed by the Assembly for its dissolution.

The Senate shall take up its functions and become constituted on the day when the National Assembly dissolves.

Let us now see what was taking place at Versailles.

In the lobbies of the Assembly, the tumult was such that the sitting could not take place. "The real sitting was taking place in the Salle des Pas-Perdus," writes M. Louis Blanc. Violent, tumultuous, or resigned comments were being uttered, groups mixed and divided: "The Right is furious," wrote M. Léon Say; "they say

that the Marshal is a second Louis XVI, that he is on the road to Varennes, and that he will end by the scaffold."

The assent of the Right Centre seemed secure; but what course would the Lefts follow? They assembled in a full meeting. M. Corne, Chairman of the Left Centre, explained and supported the Bill. Only one Deputy opposed it, but with what weight! This was M. Jules Grévy. He had followed with obvious disapproval the work of conciliation conducted by M. Gambetta and by the Moderate Republican groups in order to obtain—under the conditions we have seen—the foundation of the Republic. He had resisted every concession which had had to be made. His thoughts constantly recurred to the famous article proposed by him in 1848, and which, in his eyes, formed a whole constitution.

In his fear of a personal authority, this cold-blooded politician declared himself hostile to the institution of a President of the Republic. The new Constitution gave too large a share for the Executive, and seemed to him unacceptable. It was impossible to know whether there was not some calculation behind those strange sentiments, for the clever and taciturn Franc-Comtois thought of everything. He made a speech: "Before a large audience, M. Jules Grévy developed with a grave eloquence, and the authority attached to his name, the motives on account of which the Bill should be rejected. He pointed out the threatening character of such an anti-Republican combination."[1]

He was respectfully, but coldly received, and felt that he was alone in his opinion. MM. Jules Simon, Ricard, and Gambetta pleaded for an understanding, but under certain conditions and reservations. An agreement was not yet reached.

[1] Louis Blanc, p. 158.

Further consideration was put off until the next day, the 21st. During the night, a rumour prevailed that, if the Assembly was unable to form a Government, the Army was ready to do so. The Marshal, driven in various directions, hesitated.

The various groups held more meetings on the 21st. The Left Centre, after reflection, rejected any alteration in the Bill. The Left, "shaken by the honeyed eloquence of M. Jules Simon," decided to vote for M. Wallon's Bill as it was, and to negative any amendment whatever. The *Union Républicaine* held a meeting under the presidency of M. Henri Brisson: MM. Edgar Quinet, Louis Blanc, and Madier de Montjau opposed the resolution. MM. Corne and Jules Ferry, in the name of the Moderate Left, insisted that the text of the Bill should be accepted in full. The clever oratory of M. Gambetta carried the meeting with it, though it had been for a moment shaken by a vehement harangue from M. Madier de Montjau. By a large majority, the *Union Républicaine* decided to vote for the Wallon Bill.

The last obstacle had fallen.

The news immediately spread to the lobbies, where the Deputies of the Left rushed to meet the Deputies of the Right. Cross-currents of satisfaction and disappointment mingled with each other.

"The thing is done," wrote M. Léon Say. "Perier, Pasquier and Ricard have been instructed to confer with Buffet on the procedure to adopt. Urgency will be demanded. All the adversaries of the accord will vote against urgency; it will be the first skirmish. If nothing goes wrong, we shall have a majority of 60 or 100."

Now that the accord was concluded, nothing remained but to sanction it at a public sitting. The next one took place on the Monday, 22nd February. The Senate Bill was on the agenda. Once more, the Committee of Thirty

attempted a vain resistance. Its Reporter, M. Antonin Lefèvre-Pontalis, discussed the Wallon Bill. His was the old idea of an Upper Chamber: "Its *rôle* is to form a counterweight against numbers." The President was to be forced to hold the prerogative which he himself had renounced, to appoint 75 Senators. The largest taxpayers were to assist the Municipal Councillors in electing the delegates of the Communes. It were better that the election should take place in the principal borough of each *arrondissement*. The Assembly had some difficulty in hearing out this long and cumbersome speech.

M. Henri Wallon claimed urgency for his project, and consequently, the dispensing with the formality of the two last readings. Urgency was voted, and an immediate discussion followed, roundly led by M. Buffet. The Right noticed it. "Vote at once," they cried; "no more speeches!"

Ballot-papers were handed in amidst general disorder, most Deputies standing. There was no general discussion. M. Raoul Duval caught, so to speak, at every successive clause, moving amendment after amendment, and appealing to the National Sovereignty treated with contumely, the dignity of the Assembly compromised. MM. Lepère and Bethmont briefly answered that no one was duped by a stratagem which had no object but to delay—in vain—a vote eagerly awaited by the country. M. Wallon pronounced a few words, and each clause of his Bill was adopted. Clause I., fixing the number of Senators and taking from the President, in order to give it to the Assembly, the right to appoint the 75 Life Members, was carried by 422 votes against 261.

Clauses II. and III. were passed without discussion. Every successive amendment was rejected. M. Raoul Duval asked that the Senators should receive a salary

equal to that received by the Deputies. After a short debate the question was reserved.

The last three Clauses were carried without a debate.

On the Bill as a whole, M. Raoul Duval demanded that the Senate Bill, and the other Constitutional Bills, should be sanctioned by Universal Suffrage. This was an Imperialist doctrine, but also a Republican one. M. Raoul Duval, whose vigorous and juvenile eloquence had been constantly in the breach during this hand-to-hand battle, derided the silence of the allies who, he said, could only contradict themselves and each other if they were to open their mouths. The Constitution was being voted by dumb men! It was a sort of strangulation. "I had always thought it a benefit that contradiction, free, luminous, sincere contradiction, should take place. The new majority has decided otherwise. Their work is so precarious that they dare not bring it out into the full light of public discussion and a popular vote."

No one spoke. A vote was taken. The motion was rejected.

At the suggestion of M. Wallon, it was decided that the two laws, that on the Senate and that on the organisation of public powers, should be issued simultaneously, thus forming a constitutional whole. The vote on the two Bills as a whole was adjourned to the 24th February.

On the 24th February, M. Buffet was absent, having been called to his mother's death-bed in the Vosges. It was left for M. Audren de Kerdrel, one of the most considerable members of the Right, to preside at the historic sitting when the Republic was once more founded in France.

Before the resolution was put, M. Raoul Duval, although physically exhausted, rose to speak; he wished, he said, to renounce all responsibility before the country. He was scarcely heard. By 435 votes against 234, the

Senate Bill as a whole was passed, and the majority announced amidst a profound silence.

Then, without a moment's pause, the Assembly passed on to the third discussion of the Public Powers Organisation Bill. Again M. Raoul Duval interposed. He would have the law assert popular sovereignty. "It goes without saying," replied M. Lepère. The motion was set aside.

The text of the Bill was read. M. de la Rochejacquelein made a solemn protest when Clause V. was reached: "You are making a Republic out of your hatred for the Empire," said he to the Rights, "and the Republic will lead you back to the Empire." He attacked the Right Centre, "who though nominally Monarchical, had done nothing but prevent a Monarchy and found a Republic." He referred to October 1873: "The result is that those who wished to impose conditions upon the King meant to safeguard, not what in political language we call the principles and conquests of the Revolution, but a revolutionary spirit and revolutionary traditions." And, addressing the Duc de Broglie with cutting invective: "To vindicate in a few words the party to which I have the honour to belong, I cannot borrow more eloquent, more exalted language than the words of the honourable Duc de Broglie at the sitting of the 23rd May, 1873. 'To perish for a cause, holding the flag in one hand and standing at the foot of the ramparts, is a glorious death from which a party may rise again and which magnifies the memory of public men. On the contrary, to perish after having prepared, before suffering it, the triumph of adversaries; to perish after opening the gates of the citadel; to perish uniting the misfortune of being a victim to the ridicule of being a dupe and the regret of being an involuntary accomplice—that is a humiliation

which carries away with it the good name at the same time as the life of a statesman.'"

The Duc de Broglie sat silent.

In spite of M. de Colombet, in spite of M. Raudot, Clause V. was voted.

On Thursday, the 25th, the sitting, presided over by M. Martel, offered the same determined aspect on the Left benches. The Rights protested in vain.

A new wording was given to Clause III., regulating the powers of the President of the Republic. M. Raoul Duval asked for the opinion of the Government. The Government, through M. Grivart, declared that it accepted the text proposed by the Committee and adopted by M. Wallon. Carried. "We are being strangled!" exclaimed the Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Bisaccia. "It is a scandal!" cried the Marquis de Castellane. M. Raudot shouted amidst the tumult. Nobody heard, nobody listened. The majority was immovable. Every clause was adopted without discussion.

Now for the Bill as a whole. The hour was a solemn one. The Assembly was about to decide the fate of the country and its own name in history.

M. de la Rochette voiced the Legitimist protestation. He predicted the worst catastrophes. "Our country is very unhappy; it has gone through many sorrows, many reverses. . . . The Monarchy to-day would mean salvation; to-morrow it will mean deliverance. . . . Do not lose the memory of your kings. . . . You will return to them. From them shall your ultimate succour come."

The old Comte de Tocqueville, the son of the illustrious author of *La Démocratie en Amérique*, rose, on the other hand, to approve the energetic decision of the majority. "A man of my age has a right to be heard. Our country is tired of revolutions, tired of too many dynasties. Forget your divisions, your preferences, and

give us at last the rest and security which in the Republic alone can be found." The Marquis de Franclieu, M. de Belcastel, addressed a last supplication to the Assembly, M. de Belcastel, in a fine burst of oratory, beseeching it to pause in its course. But it was of no avail. By 425 votes against 254, the Law was carried. The Deputies stood up, groups mingled with groups; the rumour of conversations filled the vast hall which had seen the festivals of the Monarchy and now saw the birth of the Republic.[1]

The majority comprised the Lefts, the Right Centre, and a few members of the Moderate Right. The minority comprised the Right, the Extreme Right and the Bonapartists. The members of the Cabinet, save M. Tailhand and M. Baragnon, had voted for. The Prince de Joinville, who had voted with the Right Centre at most of the preceding ballots, did not vote; neither did M. Jules Grévy. But all the leaders of the Right, including the Duc de Broglie, voted.

The latter hesitated until the last minute.

"When the ballot was opened, he left the hall, and, leaning against the wall in the lobby, he remained deep in meditation. 'I hope you are going to vote, my dear Duke,' said one of his friends, coming up to him. 'Can I?' said he, 'and do you not think that my vote may be

[1] The Duc Decazes wrote on the 27th February: "We have just completed a very painful business; if parties knew how to be fair and just, our friends would recognise that this Constitution records and sanctions our right to establish a Monarchy in 1880—if we have the strength and the means—and that it condemns us to give it up only if we are then, as to-day, forced to acknowledge our powerlessness.

"In other words, we have merely said that, if we could not establish the Monarchy, the Republic would tacitly profit by it. . . . M. de Belcastel made a fine speech, full of faith and spirit; but it would have been more worthy of him to have spoken the whole truth and to recognise that the inexorable pride of one man . . . had rendered barren and powerless our true devotion to the cause of a Constitutional Monarchy. May God forgive him! . . ." —(Private, unpublished document.)

looked upon as a sign of ambition?' His friend, seeing his hesitation, went for the Duc Decazes; to whom he said, 'The Duc de Broglie hesitates about voting.'

"The Duc Decazes came up: 'Come, Albert,' he said, 'you must, for the good of the country. . . . The Marshal will be grateful to you.' And the Duc de Broglie voted."[1]

The members of the Extreme Left, MM. Barodet, Louis Blanc, Escarguel, Madier de Montjau; Marcou, Ordinaire, Peyrat, Edgar Quinet, did not vote. They resisted the supplications of Gambetta, of M. Challemel-Lacour. "In order to evade their persuasions," writes M. Barodet, "I took refuge in the lobbies." And M. Louis Blanc (p. 172) pictures *à propos* of Edgar Quinet, the poignant drama which stirred these men's souls. "He, too, resisted, but at what price! I can still see the illustrious old man sinking on his seat in such a state of emotion that tears ran down his cheeks."

[1] Ernest Daudet, p. 52.

CHAPTER IV

THE BUFFET CABINET AND THE 1875 SCARE

I. Parliamentary inquiry into the Bonapartist plot.—Bye-elections.—The Cissey Cabinet resigns.—Formation of the Buffet Ministry.—The Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier President of the Assembly.—Uncertain policy of M. Buffet.—The Assembly adjourns from the 20th March to the 11th May.—Gambetta's Ménilmontant Speech.

II. The 1875 scare.—Germany and Europe.—German Press Campaign against France.—Rumours of War.—The Duc Decazes appeals to the Powers.—M. de Gontaut-Biron and Herr v. Radowitz.—Steps taken by Count Schuwaloff at Berlin.—Prince Hohenlohe and the Duc Decazes.—An article in the *Times*.—England, Austria and Italy intervene.—Change of front in Germany.—The Czar in Berlin.—Russian circular to the Powers; peace secured.—Conclusions to be drawn from the 1875 incident.

III. The National Assembly resumes its sittings.—Bye-elections suppressed.—Complementary Constitutional Bills.—The New Committee of Thirty.—The Higher Education Bill.—The Nièvre election and the Committee of the Appeal to the People.—M. Buffet and the Left.—The Organic Law on the relations between Public Powers and the Senatorial Electoral Law carried.—The 1876 Budget.—The Assembly adjourns from the 4th August to the 4th November, 1875.

I

THE sitting of the 25th February had a sequel. The constitutional laws had been voted from fear of Bonapartism: the Bonapartists were immediately put on their trial.

The Assembly, exhausted by the length and importance of the debate, found enough strength, however, to sit down and to listen then and there to the report presented by M. Savary in the name of the Committee of Inquiry into the election of the Baron de Bourgoing in

the Nièvre.[1] M. Haentjens, a Bonapartist Deputy, exclaimed: "This is the completion of the Republican work."

It was true. The antistrophe followed the strophe. Now that the Legitimist Monarchy was excluded, the final game was being fought between Bonapartism and the Republic; but, by a strange turn, the Monarchists, the allies of the 24th May, were now the principal actors in this new drama.

The Committee of the Appeal to the People.

M. Savary's Report was but a matter of procedure; he asked, for the Assembly, that the papers should be communicated which had been used at the judicial inquiry concerning the "Committee of the Appeal to the People."

Recent bye-elections added to the somewhat exaggerated terrors of the Parliamentary world. In the Hautes Pyrénées, M. Cazeaux, a Bonapartist, had been elected on the 17th January, against M. Alicot, a Septennalist; on the 7th February, in Seine-et-Oise, M. Valentin, a Republican, had, it is true, been elected by 56,000 votes, but his Bonapartist competitor, the Duc de Padoue, had had 42,000 votes; in the Côtes-du-Nord (21st February), of which Monarchism had hitherto been master, Admiral de Kerjégu, a Septennalist, had had 47,000 votes, but the Republican, M. Foucher de Careil, had secured 41,000 and the Duc de Feltre, a Bonapartist, 30,000.

Thus, everywhere, electoral masses remained grouped around Imperial memories. The Conservative party asked itself whether it was about to be caught in this dilemma, either to run into the arms of the Empire or to abdicate in favour of the Republic. General opinion,

[1] This committee, appointed on the 13th January, 1875, was composed of nine Deputies of the Left and Left Centre, and six members of the Right Centre and Extreme Right. The chairman was M. Albert Grévy.

so strongly against the Empire in the years which immediately followed the war, seemed to be undergoing a change. On the 12th February, M. de Cassagnac, in the course of the action brought against him by General de Wimpffen,[1] had undertaken to justify the conduct of the Emperor Napoleon III at Sedan, and M. de Cassagnac had been acquitted by the jury.

In order to block the path to Cæsarism, there was no other resource than to appeal to the Liberal Conservatives, and to govern, as Marshal MacMahon had said, "with moderate men from all parties."

The Cissey Cabinet had resigned on the 6th January. The Ministers, on the occasion of an interview with Marshal MacMahon, when they informed him of the vote of the constitutional laws, reiterated their determination. On the next day, 26th February, the *Journal Officiel* announced that, at the end of the sitting, Marshal MacMahon had "requested M. Buffet to form a Cabinet." The note added that the Cabinet "should be inspired by those Conservative principles that the Marshal was firmly resolved to maintain."

M. Buffet was absent. He was in the Vosges, where his mother had just died. But his name was so obviously the right one, that he was not even consulted. On the 1st March, the Assembly, and the Lefts in particular, gave M. Buffet a signal proof of confidence by re-electing him to the chair by 479 votes out of 542.

The election of the other officers was a step further towards the union of the Centres: the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier secured 591 votes and M. Martel 468 for the

[1] This was a very sensational case. General de Wimpffen had assumed the chief command at Sedan when Marshal MacMahon, wounded, had handed the direction of the Army to General Ducrot. (See vol. ii. p. 16.) M. de Cassagnac made a violent attack on General de Wimpffen on this head. Most of the Generals who had been present at Sedan gave evidence in this case.

Vice-Presidency; the third vice-chair was unanimously accorded to a member of the Moderate Right, M. Audren de Kerdrel; the fourth to another member of the Left, M. Ricard.

M. Buffet seemed the indispensable man.

The impulse by which he was chosen was due to an error of appreciation which occurred several times during the history of the third Republic. In spite of daily contact, the members of a Parliament do not know each other well; they have to judge by the language and delivery of a speaker, they have no opportunity of sounding his heart. Their reciprocal psychology is a rudimentary one, being merely founded on words. Men should not be judged by their words, but by their conduct and actions.

Considering his past, his position, the share he had taken in the vote of the Constitution, M. Buffet, standing as he did at the meeting-point of all parties, seemed ready to be an arbiter; he was thought to be the very man who could smooth over difficulties, appease antagonism, and preserve respect for tradition.

This was far from being the case. M. Buffet was a very honest man, an indefatigable worker, an eminent debater; but he had, in the highest degree, the very opposite of the qualities required for the post offered him: he was the spirit of contradiction incarnate. By a natural and spontaneous movement, he almost always adopted opinions contrary to those which were current at the time, and even to some which were expected of him, whether those singular somersaults were caused by scruples, originality, or a paradoxical humour. He was an attentive, careful, hair-splitting man, with the most anxious, uncertain conscience; he had joined and then left every party, Orleanist, Republican or Bonapartist; wise enough, or timorous enough, to escape in time, he

had remained intact by dint of lingering nowhere. On the whole, he was in his place in the Opposition, and an incomparable critic. But in authority, with his morose temper, his unbending stiffness and also his absolute disinterestedness, he was capable of destroying with his own hands the power which he assumed, the goal he pursued, the cause which he affected to serve.

Every one wanted him in office save himself. When he arrived in Paris, he went to Marshal MacMahon and began by declining the mandate offered to him: he showed his sensitiveness by complaining that the note published in the *Officiel* had appeared without his consent. "In order to induce him to accept the burden," writes the Vicomte de Meaux (p. 250), "the Marshal had to remind him that the Presidency of the Republic had been imposed upon himself against his will, by the President of the Assembly, and to call upon him to fulfil a similar duty." He "resigned" himself, add the witnesses of his hesitation. "'I am not the man you think,' said he; 'you will have many disappointments in me, and you will one day repent not having left me the liberty of refusing.'"[1]

In his very first steps towards the formation of his Cabinet, he showed his *gaucherie* towards men and parties. He had to make a new Cabinet with old material. Do not let us forget that the Duc de Broglie was behind the scenes, and M. Thiers in the lobbies; it was between those two rocks, so to speak, that he had to pilot his ship. M. Thiers was impossible on account of the Marshal, and the Duke had to be set aside because of the Lefts.

First of all, it was agreed that the Minister for War and the Foreign Minister, General de Cissey and the Duc Decazes, should keep their portfolios. M. Dufaure

[1] Ernest Daudet, p. 57.

and M. Wallon were nominated by the Left, the latter, in virtue of his quality as Professor, at the Ministry of Public Education. The Marshal desired, in order to adhere to his formula "moderate men of all parties," that a member of the Right who had not voted for the Constitution should take part in the combination, and mentioned the name of M. Audren de Kerdrel. M. Buffet objected. M. Dufaure was consulted. Finally, as a compromise, the Vicomte de Meaux was chosen.

But who was to be Minister of the Interior? M. Bocher? He refused. Another name was on every one's lips, that of the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier. The eminent member of the Committee of Nine, the man of the tricolour flag, was a Liberal. And, too, his presence was a terror to the Bonapartists. The Ministry of the Interior was offered to the Duke. But he did not accept it. M. Buffet grew discouraged.

The Marshal sent for the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier on the Monday morning. "I asked you to come, Monsieur le Duc, in order to beg of you to accept the Ministry of the Interior." A long discussion ensued concerning the attitude to be assumed towards the Bonapartist party. The Duke refused again. However, as he was leaving the Elysée, he seemed shaken by the insistence of his friends. They took him to M. Buffet, who reopened the subject. At last, it was settled, and, on the Monday evening, the Cabinet was constituted: M. Buffet, President of the Council, with no portfolio, and M. d'Audiffret-Pasquier, Minister of the Interior.

On the Tuesday morning, a report spread that everything was changed. M. Buffet was to have the Interior, M. d'Audiffret-Pasquier, Public Education, the good M. Wallon was sacrificed. Surprise of the Left. The Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier was again called to the President, who announced these changes. The Duke, a hot-

blooded man, lost his temper and went away. Everything was upset again. For the second time, a "mysterious misunderstanding" kept the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier from office.[1]

The "moderate men" of the Left did not lose heart. They understood the necessity of not leaving the Marshal alone and unsupported at this time, when he seemed to hesitate as to the course to adopt. A Cabinet had to be formed at any cost, and—though astonishment was beginning already—it had to be a Buffet Cabinet. The Lavergne-Wallon group intervened. M. Buffet would take the portfolio of the Interior, M. Wallon that of Public Education; the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier was to be offered the Presidency of the Assembly. By these ingenious combinations, realised on the evening of the 10th, everything was set right again.

The Buffet Cabinet.

On the evening of the 11th March, the Council met for the first time at Versailles, around the delighted Marshal. The declaration was drawn up. This was the constitution of the new Cabinet:

Vice-President of the Council and Minister of the Interior	M. BUFFET.
Foreign Affairs	DUC DECAZES.
Justice	M. DUFAURE.
Finance	M. LÉON SAY.
Public Education	M. WALLON.
War	GENERAL DE CISSEY.
Marine	ADMIRAL DE MONTAIGNAC.
Agriculture and Commerce	VICOMTE DE MEAUX.
Public Works	M. CAILLAUX.

M. Louis Passy remained Under-Secretary of State at.

[1] According to a confidential communication made to M. Léon Say by the Marshal, this was due to Bonapartist influence.

the Finance; M. Albert Desjardins passed from Public Education to the Interior; M. Bardoux became Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Justice; finally, M. Jourdain, a General Inspector, was appointed General Secretary of the Ministry of Public Education.

In spite of this protracted crisis, the Assembly had continued its sittings and its labours. On the 12th March, about three o'clock, the Military Staff Bill was being discussed, when M. Buffet, followed by his colleagues, came in and sat on the Government bench. Interrupting the debate between two clauses, M. Buffet rose to speak. "We then saw," writes M. Louis Blanc, "the long, slender figure of M. Buffet, standing in the tribune. The severe expression of his countenance, his unbending attitude and lifeless eyes hardly allowed us to surmise what he was about to say. We knew it all too soon, when, in his dry voice and with the slow and firm articulation which characterises his manner of speech, he read, in the name of the Ministers, the expected declaration."

To sum up in a few words the impression produced: the declaration pleased the Rights and surprised the Lefts. There was no joyousness, no spontaneousness, no heartfelt wishes for the future of the young Republic: a morose, lengthy, diffuse speech: negations, reservations, restrictions and distinctions. After the new fact—the vote of the constitutional laws—had been stated, came one significant phrase, itself borrowed from the already commonplace words of the Marshal: "It is with confidence that we repeat the patriotic appeal made by the President of the Republic to moderate men of all parties." Add to that the assertion of a "clearly conservative" policy, an allusion to "interests"; a promise that the Government would introduce a Bill for "the efficacious repression" of the excesses of the Press. The state of

siege and the "Mayors Law" were to be maintained. As for the burning question of the administrative *personnel*, the Government purely and simply announced that it would support that which it had inherited from the preceding Government.

This was, for the Left, a most disappointing programme. M. Buffet descended from the tribune.

The Deputies, tired of this long document, stood up in some excitement; groups collected; parties gathered in consultation, and this day, which should have been a day of peace and good humour, already revealed signs of passion and irritation.

Opening Speech of M. d'Audiffret-Pasquier.

The Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier was elected President of the Assembly. With his mellow and sonorous voice, the Duke's opening speech (16th March) sounded the joyous trumpet-call of this day of triumph for Liberalism. "It was to this country's government of itself by itself, to that Parliamentary system so often libelled, that France owed in the past the glorious and prosperous times which came after such cruel disasters . . . it is owing to this system that France has in the last four years surmounted the hardest trials that a nation could suffer; it is to this system that you have, by your recent decisions, entrusted the future. . . . You have not forgotten what the cost may be to a country which foregoes its public freedom: let us prove that Liberty is the safest guarantee for order and security." The word Liberty recurred like a refrain at the end of each sentence. "There lie my dearest memories and my deepest convictions," added the speaker, amidst a burst of applause. The hymn of praise to Liberty was sung by a convinced Orleanist to Republican enthusiasm. Was there not some misunderstanding? M. Buffet's discontent grew. Now, France loves bright faces and optimistic tempers.

M. Duclerc was elected Vice-President by 301 votes, against 149 for M. Delsol and 107 to M. Lucien Brun. M. Duclerc, from the Left, an 1848 veteran, took the place of the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier. Times were changed indeed.

The next day, 17th March, a credit of 303,000 francs, destined for the pensions of M. Chevreau, a former Minister of the Empire, and of forty-two other imperial functionaries was discussed with an ill grace. Bonapartists were being made to feel the bridle and to pay for their moderate electoral success.

The true victors of the struggle had not yet spoken their feelings. They took the first opportunity of doing so. The Left Centre began, choosing for its Chairman M. Laboulaye, who had well deserved this reward. In his opening speech, on the 19th March, the new Chairman laid down some conditions. "The Republic is voted. . . . For the last four years, we have not ceased to yearn for the union of the centres which alone can give solid support to the Government. . . . We are pleased with our new allies and proud of them, but we cannot, we will not forget our companions in the struggle. We were united before the battle, we will not part after the victory. . . ." M. Laboulaye added that the group was ready to support the Cabinet, if only "exceptional laws are done away with and the administration shows a sincerely Republican character," a piece of advice which contained a warning.

Obsequies of Edgar Quinet.

It was now Gambetta's turn. He spoke at the grave of Edgar Quinet, who had died on the 27th March, and whose obsequies took place at the Montparnasse Cemetery on the 29th, when about 100,000 persons were present. It was a great Republican occasion. MM. Victor Hugo, Henri Brisson, Laboulaye and Gambetta spoke. Gambetta was faced by members of the Extreme Left, but he did not feel in the least embarrassed.

"If we differ," said he, "it is merely on a question of method. . . . Democracy, on its accession to power, finds itself faced with great duties; power entails difficulties. That party must govern which has a majority; having seized upon the power, it must be worthy of keeping it. That is why it is necessary to work, to be patient, to observe discipline, and to cultivate a spirit of combination. . . . We must repudiate the counsels of force and of exaltation. . . . Let us persevere to the end, we are in the right road. . . ." Those were not the words of one who intended to linger in port nor to leave to others the care of piloting the ship which he had built.

Hemmed in by those warnings, M. Buffet's platform seemed a very narrow one. What was the Assembly going to do? It was in the hands of a latent force, that of an accomplished fact. The laws it had passed transformed it, wrenched it from itself. By agreeing to a Constitution, the Assembly had lost its *raison d'être.* Yesterday the only moving force, it was now the obstacle. The word which an infinitesimal minority had been alone to pronounce was now in every man's mouth: Dissolution.

Yet there were undertakings to finish, useful laws to issue. The Constitution was a mere sketch; it needed to be completed by measures without which it could not even work. And then, there was the Budget, the Higher Education Bill; there were certain reorganising Bills, such as the Press Bill: the country could not remain indefinitely under martial law.

The question was put on the 15th March, *à propos* of a motion by M. Malartre inviting the Assembly to adjourn from the 28th March to the 20th May, and of a motion by M. Courcelle for the suppression of bye-elections.[1]

[1] This latter motion dated from the 29th November, 1873. M. Giraud's Report had been introduced on the 28th December of the same year. The Right, alarmed at the frequency of Republican elections, was again taking up these forgotten resolutions.

This meant that a General Election was contemplated. M. de Pressensé read, on the 18th March, a Report on the adjournment motion: "The Constitutional laws being carried, every one agrees that the Assembly should content itself with strictly necessary legislation." On a question by the Committee, the President of the Council promised that the Press Bill should be introduced and discussed in the course of the summer session. Gambetta insisted; he wished to obtain a fixed date for the General Election. "A majority has been found to vote the Constitution," said he; "another will be found to apply it."

It was thought well not to push things farther for the moment. The Assembly decided that the Courcelle motion should be taken into consideration: that is to say, it resigned itself to an early death, whilst securing a last respite; it adjourned from the 21st March to the 11th May—time for reflection.

The Ministers sent out circulars, prescribing to officials respect for the new Constitution. "A legal and *definite régime* has superseded the provisional state," wrote M. Dufaure. "This new *régime* demands prompt obedience from all."

The Prime Minister, however, remained silent, perhaps already perturbed by the difficulties of his task, by the divergence of views among the majority and in his own Cabinet. He found it especially difficult to introduce a new discipline among officials who had for years been under the influence of the leaders of the former majority, and who, moreover, trusted in the repeated promises to govern on "essentially conservative" principles. Sixteen *Préfets* obstinately continued to omit on their official paper the heading "*République Française.*" M. Buffet, questioned on the subject by the Permanent Committee, declared that he "covered with his own responsibility the officials of his administration."

M. Léon Say, in a few characteristic phrases, defines the state of mind of the Vice-President of the Council. "He seemed seized with anguish before the social peril which haunted his imagination. . . . During his whole term of office, he believed himself to be on the eve of a new June insurrection. . . . He had but one preoccupation, which was to react against the current of opinion created by the vote of the Constitution. He was even seen to seek the support of the Bonapartists."

M. de Meaux, in a different direction, is equally assertive; but it appears from his account that the fear of M. Thiers and of everything relating to M. Thiers eternally haunted the Prime Minister; that explains much.

The Marshal and M. Buffet agreed perfectly on that point: they were united by a common past. The result was an "invincible distrust" (in M. de Meaux' own language) of the Left Centre Ministers, and especially of M. Léon Say, who was considered as the mouthpiece of the former President. "An understanding with the Left Centre would no doubt have taken place without effort, the Republic being now established, if M. Thiers *had not bound the Left Centre with the Left* in spite of the contrary opinions held by the latter. . . . In the Council, M. Dufaure seems to me to have at that time sincerely desired a *rapprochement* with the Conservatives; but when he returned to his house, *the entourage in whose hands he had formerly placed himself* attempted to circumvent him once more and to attract him towards the *men of the Left*, if not towards their doctrines. As to M. Say, he had not given them up when he came among us. . . ."[1] The shade of M. Thiers still hovered over the deliberations of the Council. This was more than enough to add to the disgust at having to *be* and to act,

[1] Vicomte de Meaux, p. 256.

which was inspired in M. Buffet by the mere fact of being in office.

The Cabinet was becoming hypnotised over these petty anxieties. There was no contact with the masses, with public opinion. Doors and windows were kept closed.

It is not surprising that Gambetta thought the opportunity favourable to intervene, and to breathe upon the country the great words of faith and trust which it needed after those years of sorrow and trial.

It was left to the recognised leader of Republican opinion to defend the new institutions, to point out their bearing, their aims, their vitality, and also their Conservative value, thus easily, but brilliantly, assuming a part which should have been that of a Republican Prime Minister, the head of the Government.

Gambetta's Ménilmontant Speech.

He found himself at Ménilmontant on the 23rd April, faced by a Radical and, at first, distrustful audience. "Does the contract still hold good?" he began by asking. "Yes, yes," cried his hearers. And then the speaker launched into a detailed, even didactic explanation of the Constitutional system. Alone, Gambetta's stirring delivery could make such a public accept this long lecture on Constitutional Law. He "took the machinery to pieces," prophetically declaring that the "work was perhaps worth more than the circumstances which had produced it."

He stated that the Assembly had organised, with or without wishing it, with or without understanding it, an essentially Democratic power; the Chamber was born of Universal Suffrage, and the last word rested with it; the President was elective, "he could neither be the King's Lieutenant nor the King himself."

But it was especially on the question of the Senate

that the orator insisted, since the institution of a Senate was the object of loud reproaches addressed to the party which he represented. He went straight for the obstacle; with clear and deep insight, he showed what the Assembly had done, almost unwittingly, by creating a Senate appointed by municipal electors. It meant political life, spread in every *commune* of France; a powerful instrument of propaganda, by which the Republic alone would profit. . . . "Here are the *communes* which have hitherto been held in tutelage, severely excluded from politics; whose deliberations have been carefully watched in order to prevent politics from pervading them; . . . now, those *communes* will never elect a Municipal Councillor without inquiring into his political opinions. . . . Each *commune* will have its delegates. Those delegates will bring into the centres of which they are the natural representatives, movement and life, that is, just what France lacks. . . . The peasants of France hold their destiny in their hands, they are the first arbiters of the nation's progress. . . . A mistake has been made, the wrong label put on. That was called a Senate, and people thought it would be a Senate. . . . It is not a Senate, it is the Grand Council of the *communes* of France."

The leader of the Radical group, the politician who was being blamed at that very moment for not being able to "cut the painter," did not hesitate to celebrate, in this Parisian suburb, the accession to politics of "France's peasants," the "true Conservative forces" of the country! The orator found it easy to show that the last hour of the Monarchical Opposition had come: "What remains of the old *régime* is dead. The living must live with the living." M. Gambetta did not hesitate to hold out once again the arms of the Republic towards those who were becoming reconciled. "As for me, I

only ask of them one thing: sincerity. . . . I say that if our new allies descend with us into the electoral arena against Cæsarism, our common foe, the composition of the Senate will be the better for it; we shall have to give them their legitimate place, a place in proportion to their number, their merit, and the services which they can render to France and to the Republic."

Thus, in its general lines as in its details, Gambetta's harangue was full of actuality, sincerity and "opportunism"; it was a model Minister's speech. Beyond Gambetta, the Radical party asserted the indisputable current of general opinion. In the Assembly, M. Madier de Montjau introduced, before the end of the session, a proposal of amnesty for the convicts of the Commune.

On the 5th May, M. Charles Floquet was elected President of the Paris Municipal Council. M. Charles Floquet had resigned his Deputy's mandate on the 26th April, 1871, in order to remain in Paris to share the sufferings and perils of his constituents. After the Commune, he had founded the Republican League of the Rights of Paris, of which he became President.

II

Foreign Affairs.

The Assembly had adjourned from the 21st March to the 11th May. After the emotions of the winter and the vote of the 29th February, the political world had dispersed in order to enjoy in the country the first rays of sunshine.

As usual, the Easter holidays were chosen for Royal visits and interviews. The Press had announced a coming interview between the Emperor of Austria, Francis Joseph, and Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy, at Venice: the quarrel which dated from 1866 seemed

to be appeased. All seemed quiet and calm, and the Duc Decazes prepared to go shortly to Bordeaux.

Yet, a somewhat serious incident was holding the attention of diplomatic circles: as it concerned Prince Bismarck, a fit of temper or of hysteria was always to be feared. Prince Bismarck was at the height of his struggle against the Church of Rome; the latent resistance with which he felt himself surrounded, both abroad and in Germany, irritated him. But on whom would his wrath descend?

The Duchesne Incident.

A Belgian coppersmith of the name of Duchesne had written to the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, offering to assassinate Bismarck. The Cardinal, somewhat taken aback, had warned Berlin through the Quai d'Orsay. Thereupon, Prince Bismarck attacked the Belgian Government, accusing the Catholic Press of being, by the violence of its tone, responsible for the mentality of the coppersmith.

The Belgian Foreign Minister, Count d'Aspremont-Lynden, answered the German note clearly and firmly, treating a madman's idea with no undue measure of importance and maintaining freedom of legislation in an independent State. The incident was spoken of by the Press, in diplomatic circles and in the English Parliament. Prince Bismarck was discreetly criticised.

About the same time, the Chancellor addressed to the Italian Government a lively protest against the speeches and briefs of Pope Pius IX on the Kulturkampf. He appealed to the Law of Guarantees, asking the Royal Government to bring some weight to bear upon the Papal Court. He went so far as to ask that this law be modified, and continued the campaign he had begun in view of the future Conclave. But, there, he met with another rebuff, for the Marquis Visconti Venosta merely observed that the Law of Guarantees dealt exclusively

with the relations between the Holy See and Italy, and had no application where Foreign Powers were concerned.

The Venice interview took place on the 2nd April, a little sooner than had been announced. It was reported that the conversations of the two Sovereigns and their Ministers had borne upon religious questions; this opinion was that of the Duc Decazes: "What I have gathered by reading between the lines of newspapers and telegrams makes my first impression a favourable one. It seems to me that the two Sovereigns agreed that there was no reason to modify the Law of Guarantees according to the wishes of Germany; that the two nations had an absolute right to refuse to take part in Prince Bismarck's campaign against the Catholic Church, and that, for the future, they had no need to enter into fresh engagements to influence either the organisation or the choice of the next Conclave." [1]

With his accustomed quick mental grasp, the Duc Decazes concluded: "Germany stands, in all this affair, in a condition of relative isolation. Let us take note of the fact, but let us beware of giving any signs of elation."

Indeed, the Duc Decazes could not but suppress his elation, having under his eyes, at the very moment when he wrote this letter to a relative, the afterwards famous leading article of the *Post*—the German official organ—entitled "War in Prospect."

He went on to that subject without further transition. "I consider that it would be very imprudent to show any signs of triumph and thus to increase the anger of Prince Bismarck: the Berlin *Post* of last night began one of its articles in these words 'Is a war in sight?' and the telegram adds that, in effect, war would be certain if

[1] Letter to the Marquis d'Harcourt, in Vienna, 9th April. Unpublished private document.

Count Andrassy were to retire, and if an alliance should be formed between Austria, Italy and France. We hear at the same time, that the Emperor William is obliged by his doctors to give up his journey to Italy. Here are many symptoms of discontent of which we cannot very well appreciate the bearing, but which we must take into account. . . . On the other hand, it is said that military preparations are taking place in Germany ; it is announced from Frankfort that Army contractors have been ordered to make enormous provisions in view of possible events.[1] From Germany, it is true, I have received no recriminations or exhortations. . . . But, when the great Frederick thought the hour had come, he invaded Silesia without warning Maria Theresa, and in 1792 the Prussian declaration of war came a fortnight after the attack. I conclude that, if it please Prince Bismarck to invade us, he will not trouble to get up a quarrel, and he will face the moral disapprobation of Russia and the epistolary reproaches of Queen Victoria by an accomplished fact."

The Duc Decazes had somewhat hastily read the report of the leading article. When he saw the other German papers, he understood that a "campaign" had begun. The *Kölnische Zeitung* had opened fire in a letter from Vienna, dated the 5th April, and containing an enumeration of grievances against France. "France was preparing a war of revenge: the hasty vote of the Constitution, through an understanding between the Orleanists and the Republicans, had no other object ; the Orleans princes thought thus to conquer the throne again ; it was believed that an alliance with Austria might be counted

[1] At the same moment, the *Kölnische Zeitung* announced that France had just bought 10,000 horses in Germany, and the Chancellor, as if to give authenticity to that disputed piece of news, had issued a decree forbidding the exportation of horses, a measure which was looked upon as being aimed at France.

upon, Count Andrassy being alone in supporting a German alliance; France was pressing the reorganisation of her army in view of that near possibility."

The *Post* of the 9th April continued the argument, and, under a speculative form, drew a most effective conclusion. "'Is a war in prospect?' We believe that Marshal MacMahon entertains a desire to assist, as Head of the State, in the war of revenge, and to direct the operations in that capacity. . . . We believe that the war party in France contemplates the opening of hostilities *before* the dissolution of the present Assembly. . . . It seems to us likely that, in influential French military circles, the ruling idea is that a crown should be conquered on the battle-field. . . . If, therefore, we must answer the question posited above, 'Is war in prospect?' we are obliged to say, yes, war is in prospect, but the clouds may disperse. . . ."

Finally the *Norddeutsche Zeitung*, in its issue of the 10th, whilst appearing to contradict the article of the *Post*, was even more precise, aiming directly at France and at an undeniable fact, the recent laws on the reorganisation of the army. "The state of our international relations is not so unfavourable as the *Post* seems to think. The measures which France is taking for the reorganisation of her army are, it is true, in themselves of an alarming character; it is obvious that those measures are not solely calculated in order to re-establish the military power of France on a solid basis, and that our neighbours have in view serious armaments with a definite object which cannot escape the clear-sighted. But the *Post's* appreciations concerning Austria and Italy are not in conformity with the real state of things."

The effect of this three-part song was what might have been expected: general opinion was alarmed, diplomatic circles became excited, and stocks went down.

One fact formed a pretext for the recriminations of the German Press. The National Assembly, at its sitting of the 13th March, had passed the third reading of the law on the formation of the Staff and of the effective forces both of the Active Army and of the Territorial Army. It was an adaptation to the national strength and needs of the principle of compulsory military service and of mobilisation in time of peace which had made the military greatness of Prussia. German specialists, and particularly Marshal v. Moltke, objected, as to an aggressive step, to the measure by which it had been decided to create a fourth battalion for every regiment. That measure had been passed at the last moment, by means of an amendment, and it was difficult to see in it the least offensive premeditation: it is undeniable, however, that its object and result was to keep in the army a great many officers who had been through the war of 1870 and who were in themselves a powerful backbone for the young army. To bring the debate to that point was to touch the very essence of national independence: it meant that the question of the limitation of armaments was raised. Such a clause could not be formulated in the Versailles preliminaries or embodied in the Frankfort Treaty; but certain German personalities, perhaps Prince Bismarck himself, seemed to regret it. On several occasions, and particularly on the question of the restitution of Belfort, M. Thiers had felt that the subject was not far from the surface. His anxiety at the time when the Assembly passed the recruiting law will be remembered.

The present situation was similar. Was it really contemplated that this alarming question of the "limitation of armaments" should be raised at the very moment when the Staffs Law completed the reconstitution of French military forces?

The Duc Decazes had written on the 10th April, to the Marquis de Noailles, Ambassador in Italy: "It is a regular act of accusation: cleverly prepared, with strong deductions, it will serve as a theme for more and more aggressive developments, and may be the prelude of an action of which I cannot foresee all the bearings. . . . It was inevitable that the Chancellor, discontented with everybody, should revenge himself upon us. He will choose us for the terrible lesson through which he intends to cure Europe of her relative independence. From that moment, the Old World will be mastered and laid under the yoke of German Terror."

The Duc Decazes added: "Has Italy thought of this? Is she resigned to it?" Something was in his mind.

Hardly had the three official articles appeared when another Press, no less official, made a retrograde move. Was it felt that too much had been said? That it were well to await the effect of the first warning? Was any resistance met with, either at home or abroad? Whatever may have been the cause, the German Press "started" in another direction. The *Post* was disavowed; its editor, with his well-informed airs, held up to ridicule. The *Strasburg Gazette* declared that the intended changes in the French military forces, as yet only on paper, were in no manner calculated to irritate or to alarm Germany. On the 13th April, at Munich, the German Crown Prince said to the English *chargé d'affaires*, Sir Robert Morier, that the intentions of Germany were peaceful. A rumour ran that, on the 15th April, at a ball given by Princess Hatzfeldt, the Emperor William drew near Prince de Polignac, the French military *attaché*, and said to him: "They have tried to make us quarrel. It is all over now. I wished to tell you so." Those words, attributed to the

Emperor, were even quoted by the *Norddeutsche Zeitung*. The incident was closed.

It was apparently closed; but new prospects were opening in the secret lobbies of diplomatic circles.

General Le Flô, Ambassador at St. Petersburg, was in Paris, where he had come as a Deputy to vote in the Constitutional debate. He did not share the pessimistic tendencies of his Government and did not believe in the bellicose disposition of Germany. Prince Orloff had confirmed him in his opinion, reminding him of Prince Gortschakoff's appreciations: "For Heaven's sake, try to calm your Government. Orloff writes that they persist, in spite of everything, in their nightmare of a coming war, and that they show this on every occasion; it is a weakness; I assure you that you are not threatened. But, in any case, you have but one thing to do, to make yourselves strong, very strong." General Le Flô resolved, before leaving Paris, to have an explanation with Marshal MacMahon on the subject. He went to the Élysée on the 7th April.

The Marshal received the Ambassador, and the latter was laying before him the views of Prince Orloff and of Prince Gortschakoff when the Marshal interrupted him: "Read this," handing him a quantity of papers. The Ambassador glanced with amazement at a whole lot of secret documents, predicting an almost immediate war, notably letters from two of the most exalted persons in Europe, one of which said, "You will be attacked in the spring," and the other: "There is a change in the plans; the war is postponed until September."

General Le Flô, convinced and much shaken, departed under that impression. Whilst he was on his seventy-two hours' journey between Paris and St. Petersburg, the world was disturbed by the articles of the *Post* and other German official papers. On the 10th April, he had just

returned to the Embassy and was still in bed when Prince Gortschakoff was announced.

Why this visit? After the first greetings, Prince Gortschakoff plunged into the subject: "Well," said he, "where are you with regard to Germany?" General Le Flô was ready with his answer. He related his conversation with the Marshal and the evil designs of Germany, enumerating the proofs he had seen. He became excited as he spoke; the Russian Chancellor soothed him: "You alarm yourself too much; you exaggerate." And as the General insisted, repeating his own apprehensions and mentioning unjust accusations: "They are seeking for a conflict! But they think us weaker than we are, we shall have to be reckoned with. . . ." "You do not speak," said the Chancellor, hastily, "of the general reprobation which such an attack would occasion in the whole of Europe, and which they will not face, you can be sure of it!" Those were not idle words; they were words calculated to encourage the General.

A few days later, he was accorded a special audience by the Czar Alexander II. In the course of the conversation, he did not hesitate to open the subject which was in every one's mind, emphasising the uneasiness of the French Government. "I understand this anxiety," said the Czar, "and I deplore the cause of it, but I am convinced that Germany is far from wishing for a war; it is a ruse employed by Bismarck in order to make his authority more secure. The Emperor William is resolutely opposed to any fresh war." The conversation was a prolonged one; the delicate question of armaments was touched upon. The Czar listened to the General's explanations with kindness and attention: "However it may be," he concluded, "I repeat that they cannot make war upon you as long as you provide them with

no serious reason, and you are not doing so. If it were otherwise, that is, if Germany intended to open the campaign without a motive or under a futile pretext, she would place herself before Europe in the same position as Bonaparte in 1870." And his Majesty added, in a lower tone, between his teeth, something like this, which the expression of his face indicated better than his words: "And it would be at her own risk and peril." [1]

Then, without allowing the conversation to drop, the Czar went on: "So do not be alarmed, General, and reassure your Government; tell him that I hope our relations will always remain what they are to-day, sincerely cordial. . . . Our two countries have interests in common, and if, as I refuse to believe, you were one day seriously threatened, you would soon know it," adding, after a pause which seemed almost like hesitation, "You would know it through me."

Considering the habitual reserve of the Czar Alexander, those were weighty words; Prince Gortschakoff, commenting upon them shortly afterwards, said: "Those are weighty words, and I would not have uttered them; for they represent an engagement towards you which might create for the Czar, at a given moment, a delicate situation with regard to Germany."

However, the promise of "giving warning" did not go much further than the kindly words which Russia had, lately, untiringly addressed to France. Would it not be possible to bring the Czar and the Russian Government to go one step further and to show their hand, even to Berlin?

That was the question which the Duc Decazes asked himself, before he received General Le Flô's telegram giving him an account of the Imperial utterances. He

[1] Letters of General Le Flô, published by the *Figaro*; *Mémorial Diplomatique*, 1887, p. 344; *L'Allemagne et la Russie au XIXème Siècle*, Édouard Simon.

felt that the hour had come; he sketched out the outlines of a plan, which was slowly ripening in his mind, in a letter which he addressed to General Le Flô on the 14th April, the very day when the conversation took place. "You are aware of the bellicose or quarrelsome ardours from which the Berlin Press has been suffering lately. We have had to ask ourselves whether we should take that to mean the revelation of hostile designs and the indications of a coming attack. It is difficult to entertain that hypothesis in the face of the pacific assurances which we have for some months been receiving from St. Petersburg, London, and even Berlin. I have long considered the Emperor of Russia as having become the true arbiter of European peace, through the greatness of the part which he has been playing, and, as his eminent Chancellor expressed an absolute confidence, I could not but feel reassured. I have, therefore, not had to suffer from the feverish expressions of the newspapers. . . . Still, is it not true" (and here the Duke's ultimate thought began to come to light) "that all these precautions would be useless if Prince Bismarck decided to face the Russian Government with an accomplished fact, and to brave the Czar's strong disapproval? Such possibility might be set aside by firm language spoken *in time, preventively*, so to speak, and the alarming symptoms which I mentioned above must surely have struck Prince Gortschakoff: I might even hope that they have induced him to send some wise advice to Berlin."

Thus, in the face of the general uneasiness which prevailed, the Duc Decazes was doing his utmost to obtain from European Cabinets, and in particular from the Czar, a security such as France and Europe had not enjoyed for a long time.

Another "incident" gave him the opportunity of taking a step further.

On the 2nd April, M. de Gontaut-Biron sent him from Berlin a very detailed letter, relating a conversation which he had had that very evening, at a dinner-party given by the English Ambassador, with one of the most distinguished of German diplomats, Herr v. Radowitz. The latter was at that time Councillor of Legation at Athens. Shortly before this, in February, Prince v. Reuss, German Ambassador in St. Petersburg, being absent, Herr v. Radowitz had been sent to take his place temporarily. He was a man of great merit, with a promising future. His language was clear and simple, though he was not averse to paradox. Prince Bismarck, who treats him somewhat harshly in his *Recollections* and *Memoirs*, does not deny that Herr v. Radowitz' instructions were to speak firmly to Prince Gortschakoff, and, as he says, "to place diplomatic relations on an equal footing, even from the point of view of external forms." That was a half-confession of what was already being said, viz. that Herr v. Radowitz had been told to press Prince Gortschakoff and to offer Russia *carte blanche* on the Eastern question in exchange for a similar freedom for Germany on the French question. Such bargainings were customary with Prince Bismarck; they have, to say the least of it, the advantage of compromising somebody. Prince Gortschakoff, too cautious to be taken unawares, had not allowed himself to be drawn.[1]

[1] The question of Herr v. Radowitz' special mission was raised in 1887, after the publication of General Le Flô's letters. The *Norddeutsche Zeitung* says: "The story that Herr v. Radowitz had come to St. Petersburg in Feb. 1875, in order to sound Russia concerning her attitude in the case of a war with France was a fable invented by Prince Gortschakoff. . . . The latter, who at that time, according to himself, was still at the zenith of his power, had drawn upon himself, through having failed to observe diplomatic forms, a lesson which was expressed by the mission of Herr v. Radowitz. As to the alleged 'doctrine' of Herr v. Radowitz, it is a product of French imagination attributed to him."

Herr v. Radowitz was at that date (1887) Ambassador in Constantinople.

Conversation between Herr v. Radowitz and M. de Gontaut-Biron.

On his return from St. Petersburg, Herr v. Radowitz met M. de Gontaut-Biron at the British Embassy and conversed with him. That conversation left a feeling of uneasiness in the mind of the French Ambassador. "We may feel safe for the present, but it is difficult not to feel anxious where the future is concerned." The subject had naturally been the preoccupations of the moment. M. de Gontaut-Biron had again laid before Herr v. Radowitz the reasons which, by order of his Government, he had already given to Herr v. Bülow, the Foreign Minister, respecting the formation of fourth battalions: "The desire, the necessity, so to speak, of finding employment for the 1200 captains which a vote from the Assembly had just deprived of their posts, the unexpectedness of the vote which had been passed, the public character of that measure which could conceal no afterthought." Herr v. Radowitz admitted that those reasons were well founded, and affirmed—being, said he, authorised to do so—that everything was over, that, in Germany, people did not think of a war: "nobody wants one."

M. de Gontaut-Biron thought he might go further. "Then," he said, "why does your official Press preserve its hostile and alarming tone with regard to France?

The paper *La Turquie* published a note dealing with the report of his special mission as given by General Le Flô: "The Porte has been officially informed that the whole communication is absolutely untrue and that such overtures were never made at St. Petersburg by Herr v. Radowitz at the time of his temporary stay in that capital." General Le Flô answered by a letter addressed to the *Figaro* on the 2nd June: "What I have said of Herr v. Radowitz' mission was at the time notorious in St. Petersburg, and had been told me in the most authoritative manner by two personalities most regularly capable of being initiated into all the secrets of Russian diplomacy; I had felt obliged to report the matter immediately to the Duc Decazes, in my dispatch of the 21st April, 1875, under the rubric Political direction, No. 20."

The campaign of reproaches and unjust accusations has not ceased. Why?" Herr v. Radowitz blamed the untimely sallies of the Press, and of the *Post* in particular. And then he went to the root of the matter: "I agree; those polemics are regrettable. But are they really unfounded? We are reassured as to the present, but will you answer for the future? Can you assert that France, having regained her former prosperity and reorganised her military forces, will not *find then the alliances which she lacks to-day*, and that the resentment which she naturally fears, and that the loss of two provinces preserves, will not inevitably bring her to seek a war with Germany? And if we have allowed France to rise again and to grow, have we not everything to fear? . . . But if France cherishes thoughts of revenge, —and it cannot be otherwise—why wait to attack her until she has regained her strength and secured some allies? You must own that from a political or philosophical or even a *Christian* point of view, such deductions seem well founded, and such preoccupations are worthy of guiding Germany."

This conclusion was so exaggerated as to be easily refuted. M. de Gontaut-Biron exclaimed: "Examine the consequences of such a doctrine: if it were universally practised, the world would not know another day of peace and war would not cease to ravage it. For instance, you are at present at peace with Russia; however, you may have cause to fear her one day; is that a sufficient motive to attack her? . . . You were invoking Christianity to support your arguments: allow me to tell you that such proceedings would hardly be Christian? Who can predict the future? . . ." The conversation gradually took an academic turn. With the last cigar, reproaches were exchanged with regard to the devastation of the Palatinate by Louis XIV and the Germanic invasions of

the fifth and sixth centuries. After having discussed the historical past and the world and its future, the two diplomats parted with open countenances and a friendly shake of the hand.

As he returned home, M. de Gontaut-Biron reflected. All this seemed to him very serious, and, somewhat perturbed, he wrote on that very evening an account of the conversation to the Duc Decazes, adding a few pessimistic comments and reports of some of those rumours which run in the diplomatic world. "The English Ambassador said to me last night: 'The crisis is past, but the conviction remains that your military reorganisation is threatening for Germany. . . .' The Austrian Military Attaché is of the opinion that the German Government wishes to exert some pressure and some intimidation upon France in order to force us to modify the recent law on Staffs. A Russian who is a *persona grata* said to me: 'What I have heard alarms me. They do not believe in a war this spring, but it is feared for the end of the year.' The Press continues to threaten, and constantly harks back to the Staffs Law. I know that Herr v. Bülow's language is quite reassuring, and that, according to him, there is no cloud on the political horizon. But, in general, people are not as optimistic as he is."

The Vicomte de Gontaut-Biron concluded by advising the greatest prudence in the work of military reorganisation, and by saying, "Do you not think, Monsieur le Duc, that it would be opportune and advantageous to keep the principal European Cabinets informed of the menacing and unjust preoccupations of Germany?"

This meant the reopening of an incident which had been considered closed.

The Duc Decazes did not require to be urged. He had received the letters of General Le Flô and been

struck by the *empressement* and consideration which the Russian Government showed towards France. It was known that the Czar and his Minister were made really uneasy at the obscurities of the international situation. On the 21st April the Czar, giving an audience to General v. Weider, told him that "some anxiety had been caused in France by the military preparations of Germany, and that General Le Flô had mentioned it to him. . . ." He added that, for his part, he had answered for the pacific sentiments of Germany.[1]

The Czar obviously entertained favourable dispositions which might ripen if carefully cultivated. The moment had arrived for which the Duc Decazes had waited so long. Prince Bismarck, by his own whims as well as by the violent language of his Press, had indisposed everybody; public opinion had declared against him, and he was perhaps not absolutely certain of the support of his own Emperor. Though he was followed by a strong party, an equally powerful clique was against him at the Court. The opportunity was a unique one; it might be seized, but some manœuvring was necessary.

Here the French Minister's qualities, the subtlety, tact and ingenuity which he owed to his race and education, came to his assistance.

The Duc Decazes and the Powers.

The opinion of the Duc Decazes—he expressed it in precise terms a few days later (8th May)—was this: "Bismarck wants us to believe that he wishes for a war more than he really wishes it." M. Decazes started from this assumption when he set to work to clear up once for all the intentions of Germany and of Europe after these repeated alarms.

Following the advice of M. de Gontaut-Biron, he turned to the Powers, and first of all to Russia.

[1] *Mémorial Diplomatique*, p. 375.

On the 29th April, he sent to General Le Flô a letter of which his private secretary, M. Albert Sorel, to whom he dictated it, said that it was of capital importance in his own destiny and in that of France.

The letter began by stating the sentiments expressed by the Czar and his Chancellor, of which General Le Flô had given him an account in his letter of the 15th. He added, in order to further involve their responsibility: "I do not hesitate to attribute to these words the improvement which has taken place in Berlin within the last forty-eight hours, and which is so marked that M. de Gontaut-Biron considers that crisis—in his opinion an exceptionally intense one—as over and past." He then quoted the Emperor William's words to M. de Polignac, "They have tried to make us quarrel." Who were *they?*

The Minister went on to quote the conversation with Herr v. Radowitz. "It is left for His Imperial Majesty to complete and to strengthen his work. I have often told you that, in my eyes, the Emperor of Russia is the arbiter of the peace of the world (we can imagine how agreeable these words must have been to the Czar and his Chancellor); he can now insure this peace for a long time by the language which he employs at the time of his passage at Berlin, and by the energy with which he asserts his intention not to allow it to be disturbed. The strange doctrine developed by Herr v. Radowitz must surely revolt the honourable and straightforward conscience of this great Sovereign, and he is worthy to treat it as it deserves to be treated. . . . It is known in Berlin that the Czar will energetically protest against dishonest designs; therefore I fear that they may be concealed from him in order to face him one day with an accomplished fact. I should no longer have that fear, and my security would be absolute should the Czar declare

that he would consider a surprise as an insult, and that he *would not allow such an iniquity to take place;* with such words, the peace of the world would be secured, and the Czar Alexander is worthy to pronounce them. . . . As for me, I do not hesitate to add that I am ready to give to the Czar every guarantee that he may think necessary against any thought of aggression. . . . If, on the other hand, His Majesty were not warned in time in case of a sudden attack by Germany, let him deign to understand and to acknowledge that he too has been deceived and surprised, thus involuntarily becoming an accomplice in the trap laid before us, and I believe I may feel confident that he will cover with his sword those who rested upon his support. . . ."

These were potent words; it was perhaps running a dangerous risk, considering the relations between the Czar and the Emperor of Germany. The Duc Decazes had faith in the favour with which Alexander regarded General Le Flô; his letter concluded thus: "It is certain, at any rate, that the Emperor's journey to Berlin is an opportunity of which we must make all the use we can; for it is chiefly through him that we can ascertain the full inwardness of Prussian designs. . . ."

It is well to place by the side of this letter a brief comment which the Duc Decazes sent in another letter to M. de Gontaut-Biron, written on the same day: "I have thought it well to state, *perhaps in an exaggerated proportion,* the attitude of the St. Petersburg Cabinet; I have done so in order that he may feel grateful to me for the importance attributed to his words, and also in order that the Cabinets of Vienna and London might see that their *prudence* found no imitators. Perhaps I may be able to stir them up in that way." Here we see the hand of the wily Gascon.

General Le Flô was a downright, straightforward

soldier. He received the letter of the Duc Decazes on the 2nd May. On the 4th, he related in a telegram the steps which he took, and their result. "Your letter of the 29th April, my dear Duke, received on the evening before last, agitated me very much. However, after much reflection, I sent yesterday to the Chancellor, knowing that he was to work on that day with the Emperor—and asked to be granted an immediate audience. A quarter of an hour later, I was in his room, resolutely reading your letter to him, and as, by an excess of prudence, I passed over a few lines, the Prince noticed it: 'You are not reading all: there must be no concealment between you and me; read everything; you can tell me everything; I want to know everything; for I am going to ask you to let me send that letter to the Emperor.' Thus urgently pressed by the Chancellor; I did not hesitate; I read the whole, and, what is more, I let him take the whole of my portfolio, without keeping back a single paper (it contained an account of the Radowitz conversation). It has just been returned to me with this note from the Chancellor: 'The Emperor in person has handed these papers back to me and has asked me to thank you for this proof of confidence. His Majesty added that he confirmed every word which he had spoken to you.—(Signed) Gortschakoff.' Such an incident," added the Ambassador, "on the eve of the Berlin visit, is of capital importance."

In a letter dated the 6th May, General Le Flô added some details. He pictured the sympathetic and "juvenile" excitement of the Chancellor, who, though indisposed, had risen hurriedly to take the portfolios, and to write a note to the Emperor. He completed the story by a few comments: "Certainly, Monsieur le Duc, this is not a promise to *draw the sword* in our favour, an expression in your letter which the Prince had emphasised in our

conversation by saying to me: 'This is rather strong! but never mind, leave it— we shall not draw the sword and we shall not need to do so; we shall succeed without that.' It is therefore not a promise to fight together, it must be acknowledged, but it is a new and very precious asseveration of an important promise which thus wholly remains and is for us a guarantee of great security. . . . There is henceforth between us, after His Majesty's promises, a sort of secret, something intimate which naturally creates a common and very precious interest. . . . The merit of this invaluable improvement in our relationship is due to you, Monsieur le Duc, and also to Prince Gortschakoff, whose kind sympathy towards our country had never yet revealed itself to me with so much *abandon* and vivacity."[1]

The next day, General Le Flô met the Czar in society, and, the day after, accompanied him at a military review: "His Majesty began by saying to me, taking both my hands with a kindliness to which I have not been accustomed, that he had been extremely touched with the trust I had shown in him by showing him documents of such marked interest. He very much praised M. de Gontaut-Biron's calmness and the wisdom of his answers to M. de Radowitz' extraordinary theories; and, as I pointed out to him, on that subject, what aberrations of the mind could be the result of blind passion. . . ." "To say the least of it!" interposed the Czar, "but I hope that all that will calm down; in any case, you know what I have said to you; I have not forgotten it and I will keep to it." And the next day, at the review, the Emperor, taking leave of the Ambassador, said to him: "*Au revoir*, I shall remember," and, alluding to a passage in the Duke's letter, he added, "*And I hope that there will be no surprises.*"

[1] Private unpublished document.

Count Schuwaloff in Berlin.

In the meanwhile, other events were taking place in Berlin, in London and in Paris. Count Schuwaloff, recently appointed Russian Ambassador in England, was on his way to his post. He left St. Petersburg on the 4th ; on the 5th he was in Berlin. Count Schuwaloff was *persona grata* at the Prussian Court ; he was welcomed with confidence. The Emperor William returned from Wiesbaden on purpose to give him an audience. Count Schuwaloff had, on the 5th and 6th, two conversations with Prince Bismarck. The Ambassador is said to have had a special mandate to enlighten the Emperor William on the views of Russia. As his words met with some incredulity, it appears that he said : "Some one will soon come, better authorised than myself, and you will be obliged to give way to evidence." The Count started for London on the 6th, charged with a similar mission to the British Cabinet.

The intentions of Russia were so decided that the Czar had authorised his Ambassador to declare that, in order to avoid any reason for disbelieving his ardent love of peace, he was ordering that his army, already on its way to Merv, should retrace its steps and give up the campaign.

In Paris, the Duc Decazes had had, on the 28th April, a long conversation with the German Ambassador, Prince Hohenlohe.[1] The latter was a conciliating and affable man, of moderate views ; he professed great astonishment at the violent campaign which was taking place, and said, with every appearance of good faith, that he could not understand it. Nevertheless, his prudent, constrained and reserved manner rendered communications with him

[1] It appears from the private correspondence of the Duc Decazes that, *in spite of written statements to the contrary, three* conversations took place between the Duc Decazes and Prince Hohenlohe : one on the 28th April and the two others on 4th May. (See below, p. 235.)

somewhat difficult. It was difficult to estimate the exact value of his words, or rather of his half-confidences, self-contradictions and shakes of the head. Diplomats of the old school, cautious to an extreme, who withdraw a statement as soon as it is made, are indeed embarrassing! Prince Bismarck showed great consideration for the character of Prince Hohenlohe; but he knew to perfection how to make use of the characteristics of each of his agents. No one ever knew, themselves least of all, whether he told them or made them tell him his innermost thoughts.

The two interlocutors began by expressing mutual astonishment at this "unjustifiable" alarm. "Then," wrote the Duc Decazes to M. de Gontaut-Biron (29th April), "I allowed myself to expound our wishes for peace, which is to us a duty as well as a necessity. . . . 'Not only,' said I, 'would we not attack you, but, if you attacked us, we would let the odium of the aggression rest with you; we would not defend ourselves. . . .'" It will be remembered that M. Thiers had intended holding similar language at the time of the Belfort incident.[1] The Duc Decazes also said: "We do not seek to create difficulties for you, nor to form alliances against you. We desire but to secure peace and we prove it on every occasion. . . . I will not provide you with the shadow of a pretext. In the eyes of the world, I will justify the absolute correctness of my attitude; whatever you may do, I will not attack you, and, finally, if you invade us, I will advise the Marshal to retire with his troops and his Government to the banks of the Loire, and to wait, without a single shot, for the justice of Europe and that of God to pronounce upon you. That is why I am neither moved nor perturbed by all these alarms; I am sure of myself and of my conscience; but, in truth, I

[1] See vol. i, p. 583.

think that you are very foolish to excite yourselves in that way, and that you would be even more guilty if you allowed yourselves to fall upon us; for after all, you are also responsible to the human conscience, and you should fear to offend it."

After these vehement words, which he called "very calm," the Minister felt it advisable to open out a less sombre prospect: "For all this false and evil policy, you should substitute a simpler and more straightforward course. Make of us, your vanquished adversaries of yesterday, your friends of to-morrow; by securing peace, relieve our people and yours from the odious burden of taxes which crush them, and of armaments which demoralise them! You may consider this some day, and, on that day, you will find me ready to listen to you. . . ." There was some imprudence in those words, for they opened up that question of disarmament which had so much alarmed M. Decazes on another occasion. If Germany took up the suggestion, though it was only made in general terms, the discussion might become embarrassing.

Prince Hohenlohe did not answer very much. The Duc Decazes had abstained from mentioning Herr v. Radowitz' theories, of which he had made so much in another quarter: "I was not sure of doing so calmly," he writes. . . . "I think the Ambassador left me under a good impression." That is the opinion generally left in the mind of the principal speaker by interviews of this description.

The official correspondence kept the principal Embassies informed of what was going on, and every one was on the *qui vive*. With all necessary prudence, the French Foreign Minister was trying to "excite Europe." Writing to his uncle, the Marquis d'Harcourt, Ambassador in Vienna, he said, "Have they not the courage

to proclaim that all five want peace?" He spoke of a Congress, a Conference, a European Court of Arbitration "which would be called to pronounce on all the differences which might take place and which would become an equal guarantee against any bold preponderance. . . ." In that dark hour, agitation reigned everywhere.

Effect on the British Cabinet

The London Cabinet was at last awakening from the kind of slumber in which Lord Derby vegetated as a rule. The Belgian incident had touched the secret fibres of British politics. Better informed, perhaps, than the parties interested, the British Minister soothed alarms and asserted that the "great agitator" was aiming at Austria and not at France. In the meanwhile, he was stirred by the news which Count Schuwaloff brought of the Czar's sentiments. The *chargé d'affaires* in London, M. Gavard, succeeded, by urgent pressure, in shaking his affected tranquillity.[1]

By dint of plaints and protests, the Duc Decazes had attracted attention. He was beginning to foster a European mental attitude. On the 2nd May, the Russian Emperor, in a farewell audience to Baron v. Langenau, Ambassador for Austria-Hungary, had spoken of the general political situation. The Czar mentioned the idea, to him a familiar one, that, as long as an understanding existed between the three Imperial Courts, peace could not possibly be disturbed; France could undertake nothing without an ally; she had no aggressive intentions, and he himself was inclined to think Prussian anxieties exaggerated. . . . The German Ambassador, Prince v. Reuss, to whom Baron v. Langenau at once communicated this conversation, relates this and comments upon it: "Those sentiments, expressed by the

[1] *Un Diplomate à Londres*, p. 243, Ch. Gavard.

Czar, in great confidence, to my Austrian colleague, seem to me a further proof that the Czar firmly believes that the uneasiness which reigns, now and again, in many minds, comes from Berlin. It seems to me beyond doubt that that idea meets with credence here, at the Foreign Office, and that Prince Gortschakoff does not combat it."[1]

Prince Hohenlohe calls on the Duc Decazes.

The movement was taking shape; but something more was wanted. Prince Hohenlohe was on the point of going to Germany for a short stay; his departure had been announced for some time. On the 4th May, in the morning, he had come to take leave of the Foreign Minister. Now, that very same day, in the evening, he asked to be received again by the Duc Decazes: a most unusual step.

The Ambassador told the Duc Decazes that he had informed Herr v. Bülow of the more favourable impressions gathered in Berlin by M. de Gontaut-Biron, and of which he had heard through the Duc Decazes, to the effect that the explanations concerning the fourth battalions and the general military condition of France had dispersed German anxiety. . . . Now Herr v. Bülow had written to Prince v. Hohenlohe "by a messenger who arrived on the preceding evening," that "the optimism of M. de Gontaut-Biron seemed exaggerated, that the German Government was not convinced of the inoffensive character of French armaments; that it was not proved that the Staffs Law had been voted merely to secure the future of 1200 captains; Herr v. Bülow does not hesitate to believe that France has 'at this moment' no hostile intentions, and he holds himself assured of the sincerity of the pacific sentiments of the French Government; he even believes in those of France in general.

[1] *Mémorial Diplomatique*, p. 375.

But the German Staff considers that a war against Germany is the final object of these armaments and reflects upon the consequences."

Then, the Ambassador enumerated other grievances, and in particular the following, a somewhat original one: that France was preparing a war fund by piling into the coffers of the Bank six hundred millions in twenty-franc notes, to which the Duc Decazes immediately made the obvious answer that, in order to gather in these notes, one had to give good golden louis in exchange, which was a singular fashion of preparing a war fund!

Prince v. Hohenlohe added that he had not been charged to make this communication; it had been addressed to him *for his personal information*, and, perhaps, because it was thought in Berlin that he himself did not attach sufficient importance to the whole business. But he wished to inform the Duc Decazes before his departure—which he had even postponed for the purpose.[1] Then, suddenly assuming another tone, the Prince recalled the conciliating words with which the Duc Decazes had closed the last conversation, and said that it was time to enter into a policy of understanding and confidence between the two Governments. He had mentioned the sentiments of the Duc Decazes to Prince Bismarck, and the latter had replied with approval, declaring himself ready to seek some ground upon which this accord should become manifest.

The Ambassador then examined the questions which might give rise to an accord. He reviewed all the current affairs in Europe: first, the Eastern questions, then the relations with Italy, with the Holy See, with Spain, with Belgium (where the recent difficulty, observed

[1] This account, which has the authority of the Duc Decazes' own pen, differs very materially from that of M. Ernest Daudet, followed by that of the Duc de Broglie.

Prince Hohenlohe, was turning into an *academic discussion*). In this general survey, Prince Bismarck saw no point, said Prince Hohenlohe, in which a misunderstanding with France should be necessary and inevitable. But there was no other conclusion to the Chancellor's letter. It seems that France was offered the alternative, Herr v. Bülow showing the threatening face of the medal and Prince Bismarck the smiling one, or rather that by a somewhat clumsy process, not unfrequently resorted to, friendship was to be enforced by threats. "I conclude," adds the Duc Decazes, "that M. de Hohenlohe has received orders not to let me suppose that the emotion caused by our Staffs Law has entirely subsided, neither that Germany is entirely enlightened or reassured on that point; but that, at the same time, he was to beware of alarming me and of opening my eyes to the intentions of Germany. Prince Bismarck's letter was therefore intended to destroy in my mind the impression produced by Herr v. Bülow's." All that was not very clear.

Marshal v. Moltke.

At Berlin, M. de Gontaut-Biron, hanging upon every word he heard, was a prey to varied feelings. On the part of Germany, the game seemed intentionally prepared, since intimidation proceeded in every direction on exactly the same lines. The Baron de Nothomb, Belgian Minister, had had, early in May, two interviews, one with Prince Bismarck and one with Marshal v. Moltke, and he had rendered a faithful account to the French Ambassador. Prince Bismarck had said that France could not keep up the considerable increase of military expenses in which she had embarked, and that she would be driven either to disarm or to fight before long. On the other hand, Marshal v. Moltke said: "I see nothing but the *fact;* the creation of a fourth battalion per regiment, increasing the French army by 144,000 men, is a fact which

peremptorily means preparation for war: in that case, we must not wait until France is ready, and it is our duty to anticipate events. . . ." Marshal v. Moltke added, it is true, "We shall have no war this year." "A mysterious policy!" exclaims M. de Gontaut-Biron in despair.

He constrained himself to a distasteful step. He went to Herr v. Bülow, Foreign Minister, "avoiding, however," he says, "giving much importance to my visit." He asked, "with an indifferent air," "whether there was anything new." "Nothing," said the other, "hesitating." That hesitation alarmed the French diplomat, who betrayed his anxiety and began of his own accord to quote the words of Marshal v. Moltke, "usually so taciturn."

Herr v. Bülow, "without appearing to attach any consequence to it," began to speak of the Staffs Law and of the uneasiness which it inspired in military minds. . . . For the tenth time, M. de Gontaut-Biron repeated his explanations, wilfully misunderstood. Then, suddenly, on a turn of the conversation, Herr v. Bülow made a passing allusion to the ambiguous course taken in Paris by Prince Hohenlohe. . . . "Herr v. Bülow then spoke of a conversation which Prince Hohenlohe seems to have had within a few days (the letter was dated the 7th May) with your Excellency by order of the Chancellor, but all that was in such vague and obscure terms that I could not accurately report the impression produced upon the Berlin Cabinet. I hardly even understood the object: it seemed to me that there was some idea of a possibility of an eventual *entente* between our two nations concerning certain questions still at this time relegated to the second rank, *such as Eastern politics*. . . . The experiment having been tried with success *à propos* of the acknowledgment of

Marshal Serrano, why should it not be tried again elsewhere? . . ."

This insistence concerning plans of a common action was very striking, coming on the eve of the Czar's journey, and especially when *an Eastern policy* was repeatedly mentioned. Was Prince Bismarck intriguing to prepare the Berlin Congress? Was he, too, endeavouring to "excite Europe," but against Russia? We are told in his *Recollections* that his choice was already made, and that, between Austria and Russia, he would pronounce against the latter Power. Perhaps he was taking the measure of Prince Gortschakoff on the eve of events which he foresaw, and the whole affair may have been but a sounding operation. If such was the case, the form of the proceeding was not more becoming than the intentions behind it. The "other Chancellor," with less boldness but more subtlety, warded off the blow before it had been struck.

However it may be, the work was so complicated that nobody at the time understood its real meaning, and M. de Gontaut-Biron adds: "I repeat it, M. de Bülow was so obscure in his statements that I did not understand whether the interview with Prince Hohenlohe, which might have had a far-reaching importance, did or did not possess any." On the eve of the Czar's visit, the impression was that of a tangled complication rather than a dangerous one. The Vicomte de Gontaut-Biron's letter ended with two sentences: "I wish to add that, at the time of writing, there is a feeling of relief. If the war is to come, I am inclined to think that it will not be for this year." "The Czar's visit will certainly be an important event, every one is agreed upon this."

The *Times* Article.

At that moment, when every one was anxious, ignorant of the drift of events, a most propitious time for misunderstandings, intentional or

otherwise, a ray of light was projected from outside on that tissue of obscurities woven by slow, diplomatic workers.

In its issue of the 6th May, the *Times* published an article by its Paris correspondent, M. de Blowitz, written on the 4th, and only inserted under most explicit reservations. M. de Blowitz has related since that he had had two conversations with the Duc Decazes, one on the 29th April, and one on the 2nd May, and that the latter had seemed preoccupied by the silence at Berlin (which, by the way, was not quite accurate, since Prince Hohenlohe had lengthily conferred with the Duc Decazes on the 29th April). The Foreign Minister had thought that secret designs should be brought into the light of day. "It was well to throw a bomb before the Czar's arrival in Germany." If public opinion was invoked, explanations would have to come.

Are we to believe all this? The Duc Decazes was a prudent diplomat. He repeats on two occasions in his correspondence—written at the time of the events to intimate friends from whom he had no secrets—that M. de Blowitz' article was not inspired by him, but by the German Ambassador, Prince v. Hohenlohe: "The letter in the *Times* which is making such a sensation here has been suggested to Blowitz by Hohenlohe himself. Alarmed at the mad adventure into which his country was about to run, it would seem that he tried to prevent it by a revelation calculated to raise in England an outcry of reprobation, and which indeed did so. I have reason to believe that he thought the effect produced would cause the official newspapers to call this accusation a slanderous one, and determine in Berlin a wholesome reaction. So be it! I would have been afraid to run such a risk, and I contented myself with publishing in the *Moniteur* a refutation of the article in

the *Annales Prussiennes.* The calm and moderate tone of that refutation was much appreciated." [1]

It is probable that M. de Blowitz had been put on the track by the Duc Decazes, and that afterwards, collecting materials wherever he found them, the clever journalist had obtained from the German Ambassador the substance of the sensational article which placed the diplomatic incident within reach of the general public.

His letter to the *Times* offered a somewhat darkened picture of the state of anxiety which prevailed amongst well-informed circles; choice extracts from the articles which had appeared in the German Press dramatised the reasoning which, in that country, led influential men towards the idea of a coming war: "We have signed a bad treaty; the 5,000,000,000 fr. which have been paid have made France no poorer, and we have not seen a kreutzer of it. Belfort remains a thorn in the side of Germany. Let us finish with France." (This seems almost like an echo of the conversation of M. de Gontaut-Biron with M. de Radowitz.)

"To finish with France is not only an opportunity to be seized, it is a duty towards Germany and towards the world (remember the 'Christian' duty). Europe will never be secure as long as strife remains possible, and it will be possible as long as the blunder of the Frankfort treaty is not repaired, for it leaves France in a position to survive and to re-enter the arena. Germany is troubled by the consciousness of having only half crushed her foe, and, being obliged, in order to defend herself, to sleep with one eye open. . . ."

[1] Letter to M. de Gontaut-Biron (8th May). See p. 243, the other quotation. The hypothesis of a German inspiration had not escaped contemporaries; see *Mémorial Diplomatique*, p. 311. On the other hand, the diplomats who were interested at the time believed in the direct intervention of the Duc Decazes. See Gavard, p. 244.

The article thus laid out the plan which was said to have dawned in the mind of the war party : "Those who reason thus come to a positive conclusion. The war, they say, must be promptly undertaken and terminated in order to reduce France to a condition which will allow Germany the rest which she requires to turn to the development of her greatness. It is necessary to invade France, to march upon Paris, to take position on the Avron Hills, from which the capital could be reduced, and then to force France to sign a new treaty, depriving her of the Belfort territory only, limiting the numbers of her active army, and levying a fine of 10,000,000,000 payable in twenty years with a 5 per cent. interest and with no anticipated payment of capital. Paris to be attacked only in case France should refuse to sign the treaty."

The article reviewed all the European Powers, and remarked that, among them, Russia alone was capable of opposing an immediate attack from Germany. "Only one Power is embarrassing and should be taken into account. When, in February last, Herr v. Radowitz foresaw the Russian policy in the East, when he made it be known that Germany did not think herself obliged to hamper the policy of Russia, he was told that Russia merely pursued in the East a policy of moral conquests and that she neither would nor could obtain any material advantage. It is therefore Russia alone who must be shown the necessity of ending for a long time, if not for ever, the periodical alarms which disturb the world." M. de Blowitz said that it was to the interest of all that the intentions of Germany and the European situation should be known: "If something happens in your house," said he, "do not call out, 'Stop thief!' People would say that it is your business, and nobody would come; but cry 'Fire, Fire!' for a fire might spread over the whole village."

General Outcry.

The letter produced a great effect, different perhaps from what had been expected. The *Times* management, which had at first expressed some reservations whilst publishing the article, now denounced "an attempt unprecedented since the first Empire." The English Press, the European markets, and diplomatic circles followed suit. An immense clamour arose, mingled with stupefaction, indignation and terror. When English opinion asserts itself, the Government becomes attentive. The *Times*' gong completely roused Lord Derby. M. Gavard informed by telegram of the conversation with Prince Hohenlohe, went to see the Minister (6th May). "I spoke," he writes, "with absolutely unfeigned emotion, for I believed in an immediate danger." He received from Lord Derby the following declaration: "Such an aggression would arouse general indignation in Europe. . . . You may count upon me; you may depend upon my Government not to fail in its duty; I give you, regarding this, every assurance that can be given by the Minister of a Constitutional Sovereign. . . ." Perhaps this promise did not mean very much, as M. Gavard himself remarks, for England was unarmed at the time, and her objurgations were hardly more than "powder shots."

But, what was better, the London Cabinet undertook to "rouse Europe." The Cabinets of Vienna and Rome were urged to join England and Russia in bringing pressure to bear upon Berlin. Queen Victoria wrote once more to the Emperor William to plead the cause of peace. Of this, we have an indubitable proof in a letter written by Bismarck to the Emperor on the 13th August, 1875, and published both in his *Recollections* and in his *Memoirs*: "I am still ignorant of the source of these rumours; but it must be a very credible one for the exalted lady who has written to your Majesty to have shown so much insistence, and for the English Govern-

ment to have taken such important and unfriendly measures towards us."

One thing, however, still troubled the Duc Decazes, perhaps merely an uneasy recollection of the overtures he had made at the end of his first conversation with Prince Hohenlohe. He wrote to M. de Gontaut-Biron (8th May): "I can see that the German Chancellor now desires to withdraw from this quarrel of his own seeking, and that his design is less to make war than to profit by the terror which he inspires in order to realise a plan which has long been in his mind. He no doubt regrets having neglected to insert, amongst the clauses of the treaty which he imposed upon us, a limitation of our military forces, and he no doubt intends to set as a condition to the appeasement which the Powers will demand from him, their promise to impose a sort of disarmament upon us. Disarmament! As if it were possible to disarm, when one has never been armed! . . . I foresee this idea, and I protest against it before it is expressed. Nothing can justify or explain it, nothing can induce Europe to adopt it."

There was some imagination in this foresight. But imagination is a precious quality in a statesman. And, as M. de Blowitz remarked, it was a way of shouting "Fire!" and of alarming the other Powers. "If to-day, at a frown from the German Chancellor, the Powers were to ask us to reduce our military state, and to abdicate once more, not only our own abdication and disarmament would be consummated, but also theirs. If that door should be opened by them, they would all in their turn be treated in a similar way."

From the long letter which the Minister wrote to his Ambassador in order that the latter should receive it at the time of the arrival in Berlin of the Czar and Prince Gortschakoff, we must also quote the following passage: "To

accede to any plan of disarmament would be to deliver France and Europe over to Germany, and the Czar will not consent to it. What he desires is peace! We promise, we swear to him that we shall keep it, that we shall stand by his side to maintain it and to make it respected. You can tell him so, you can give him that promise entirely and completely. We want to remain armed, to 'become strong' (according to the advice of Prince Gortschakoff), but merely and exclusively in order to secure peace jointly with Russia, and while undertaking to do nothing without or against her. . . . Is not that far better for the Czar than the annihilation of France and the destruction of his great-uncle's work?" The Duc Decazes added, "I have allowed my heart to speak, and you will understand this cry of despair." The diplomat, when writing this letter, had been prompted by the orator who is to be found in every Girondin.

Prince Orloff, the Russian Ambassador, who helped him with his presence and advice throughout this crisis,[1] entered the Minister's room just as he was about to close his letter; he gave him a piece of wise and discreet advice. "As to the question of disarmament, Orloff, in his dispatch, leaves it on one side, being unwilling to let his master's mind dwell upon it, but merely qualifies it as

[1] Concerning the attitude of Prince Orloff, who entertained specially friendly relations with M. Thiers, the part taken by M. Thiers during the above incident has been much discussed. We read in a letter from the Duc Decazes that, at the beginning, M. Thiers called the alarm of the French Government and diplomatic agents "nonsense." But the Duc Decazes allowed him to see M. de Gontaut-Biron's letters. "At once, M. Thiers declared to Orloff that all this was very grave. . . . He spoke of the Marshal and of us to the Russian Ambassador in the kindest way, intending that his words should be repeated. . . . At the reopening of the Assembly, M. Thiers came up to M. de Cissey and to me and told us that we might rely upon him and his friends. . . . M. Thiers has, I must say, behaved perfectly, showing how united are all Frenchmen in their desire for peace and concord."—Private unpublished letter from the Duc Decazes to M. de Gontaut-Biron (17th May).

contrary to the interests of Russia. He does not wish it to be thought that we could ever entertain such a possibility."

The anxiety with which the Duc Decazes awaited news from Berlin after the 10th May will be easily understood.

Bismarck Changes his Attitude.

Everything went off in the simplest manner. Prince Bismarck merely shifted his ground and took his precautions.

On the morning of the 10th May, the very day when the Czar arrived, the *Norddeutsche Zeitung* declared that nothing justified the alarmist campaign led by certain papers. "The language of the European Press is all the more incomprehensible in that absolutely nothing has taken place which might disturb the relations between the German and the French Governments . . .;" and again the next day, in words which flavoured of Bismarckian inspiration, the same newspaper denounced "the hypocritical league composed of Ultramontane politicians and Stock Exchange 'bears':" "We are authorised to assert that our official relations with the French Government have never been more friendly (!!), more peaceful (!!) since 1870 than they have been during the weeks and days which have just elapsed."[1]

As to the Emperor William, he was not in favour of a war. He was ignorant of the details of the intrigue. In that direction, the Czar would find no obstacles.

The Russian Sovereign arrived in Berlin on the 10th May at midday. In the course of the day he saw the Emperor and the Empress Augusta, who called at the Russian Embassy, where the Czar was staying. He went to the Foreign Office, and saw Prince Bismarck, with whom Chancellor Gortschakoff had a long conversation. In the evening, a family dinner took place. The next

[1] *Mémorial Diplomatique*, 1875, p. 311.

morning, a review at Potsdam. At lunch, the Emperor William pronounced a short toast, celebrating in the most cordial tone "a mutual friendship and fraternity in arms." The Russian Emperor answered no less affectionately, and the Sovereigns embraced each other. In the afternoon, the Czar called on the two Field Marshals, v. Moltke and Manteuffel. In the evening, a gala dinner took place, and, the next day, the Imperial visitor started for Ems.

In every place the Czar's language and that of his hosts remained the same. At the earliest possible moment M. de Gontaut-Biron received a visit from Prince Gortschakoff at the Embassy. "You have been anxious," said the Russian Chancellor, "you may feel reassured. The Czar, who wishes to see you, will reassure you even more completely. Bismarck has shown himself full of the most peaceful intentions; he declares that the relations with France have never been better."

This was the language of the *Norddeutsche Zeitung*.

The Czar received the Diplomatic Corps at the Russian Embassy and gave M. de Gontaut-Biron a private audience; he detained him a long time and repeated to him the formal assurance which he had received: "Nobody wanted war, nobody had wanted it." At the end of the conversation the Czar stood up and said solemnly, as if epitomising his thoughts: "Peace is necessary to the world; each of us has enough to do at home. Rely upon me and do not be anxious. Tell Marshal MacMahon of my esteem for his person, and of my wishes for the consolidation of his Government. I hope our relations will become more and more cordial, we have interests in common, we should remain friends." [1]

[1] Here are a few passages from the private letter which M. de Gontaut-Biron wrote to the Duc Decazes: ". . . We have come through this alarm-

Prince Bismarck was not enjoying himself. Irritated by those confabulations, during which he was left out in the cold, vexed by the procession of diplomats who came, each from one of the great Powers, to exhort him to good behaviour, he answered abruptly, as he had done to the English Government: "Prince Bismarck is obliged for your good offices, but they were quite superfluous, as he has never contemplated a disturbance of the peace." The presence of Gortschakoff in Berlin, which took a "success" from under his very nose, provoked him beyond measure. The Czar Alexander told several people that no one wanted a war, and that Prince Bismarck's intentions were altogether peaceful. But those asseverations in themselves were significant.

On the 14th May, Prince Gortschakoff addressed to all Russian agents in European Courts a telegram (not in cipher) which is said in Bismarck's *Recollections* to have read as follows: "*Now* peace is assured;" *now* meant "under Russian pressure." The German Chancellor's anger is easy to understand. He himself, in his *Recollections* (vol. ii.), tells us that he upbraided the Russian Chancellor, and took revenge upon him by all kinds of bitter jokes.

He complained of Gortschakoff to the Czar. But the Emperor, "laughing and smoking," shrugged his shoulders, and advised Prince Bismarck, it is said, "not to take senile vanity too seriously." Bismarck is obliged to admit that this "disapprobation" was not

---

ing crisis far better than I expected, and we certainly owe it to the Emperor of Russia. . . . The word *disarmament* was not even pronounced. . . . The Emperor Alexander was kind, gracious, and faithful to the promises he made in St. Petersburg. . . . I observed, with him and with Gortschakoff, the reticence which Le Flô had advised. . . . To do the latter justice, I must say that I had feared that he had built too much on the Czar's words; it is not so. . . . I protest against Bülow's version of my exaggerated optimism. . . ."

expressed in a sufficiently authentic manner to "cause once for all the disappearance of the 'legend' according to which we had, in 1875, the intention of attacking France."

He accuses Gontaut and Gortschakoff of having invented that "legend" at the time of the former's visit to St. Petersburg. It would be better if he owned that he himself, by his own imprudence and boastings, his double game and his coarse wiles, by no means refined by the tone of the official Press, had originated it.

He was now caught.

European Opinion.

Europe had been carried away by the clever eloquence of the Duc Decazes, and the address with which the French Minister had taken advantage of an opportunity for which he had long been watching.

Every one now claimed his share of success. On the 11th May, in the House of Commons, Sir Charles Dilke asked a question of the Foreign Secretary concerning the relations between France and Germany. Mr. Bourke answered that he was happy to say that the Government had received reassuring declarations from Berlin on that same morning. On the 24th May, on a question by Lord Hartington in the House of Lords, Disraeli acknowledged that he had indeed advised the Queen to remonstrate with the Emperor of Germany concerning Franco-German relations, and that that remonstrance had received a satisfactory answer.

At last, in the House of Lords, on the 31st May, Lord Derby, answering Lord Russell, stated, somewhat heavily, that the cause of the general European anxiety lay in the words uttered by "exalted persons in Germany, and reported elsewhere—words according to which . . . the French Army had become a source of danger for Germany. . . . It was said that there was an intention of attacking Germany; the latter might think herself

called to give the first stroke. . . . The danger was that Germany, persisting in her apprehensions, should formally ask France to discontinue her armaments. Such a request would make the keeping of the peace very difficult." That was why the English Government had thought it well to intervene, in order to dissipate the feelings of distrust which were fostered in both countries. "We found the Russian Government determined to make every effort in favour of peace, and the Czar's last visit to Berlin gave us the opportunity of supporting, as much as seemed necessary, the exhortations which the Emperor of Russia appeared inclined to make during his visit."

This statement and the word *exhortations* pushed the knife more deeply into Bismarck's heart. The "legend" was becoming concrete. The *Reichsanzeiger* hastened to assert that, though the increase of the French Army Staffs had produced a certain emotion in Berlin, the German Government had taken no warlike resolutions, nor even remonstrated with the French Government.

At no time had the Government contemplated claiming from the French Government, either a reduction of its military forces or any delay in the reorganisation of its army.

The Duc Decazes did not need such clear and positive declarations in order to feel satisfied. He enjoyed his success, quietly, as was his wont, but with delight.

He wrote already on the 11th May to M. de Corcelle, Ambassador at the Vatican: "Until now, the news from Berlin may be considered satisfactory. It is incontestable that the Emperor Alexander came with the most peaceful dispositions. England, on her side, had urged Rome and Vienna to order their agents to give energetic support to any steps the Czar might take. I fancy that the happy solution of the Polish question counts for a great deal in the excellent mood of the Czar."

The Duc Decazes rejoices.

On the 14th May, he was relieved from anxiety. Writing privately to the Marquis d'Harcourt, at Vienna, he said: ". . . This pacific result is indeed due to the Emperor Alexander. We must not say so too loudly or in such language as to offend England. But we cannot forget that it was only after the arrival of Schuwaloff in London, and at his request, that Lord Derby begged the Courts of Rome and Vienna to support the Czar's efforts. . . ." M. Decazes' confidences were cleverly thought out: "The situation seems to me perfectly clear: faced by the concert provoked by his action, and formed in order to protest against his designs, Prince Bismarck immediately decided to deny everything. After having tried to strangle us and having been prevented by the Powers, will it occur to him to seduce us and to tempt us by deceitful promises? Certain symptoms seem to me to point in that direction." (This was an obvious allusion to the second part of the conversation between Prince Hohenlohe and the Duc Decazes; things took a different aspect under his clever touch!) "For the present, however, he is sulky and talks of resigning."

And, as his correspondent was about to be entrusted with the post of Ambassador in London, the Minister ended by this pregnant sentence: "You will have in London a fine opportunity of utilising this first show of valour on the part of England. I continue to rely upon her less than upon Russia. But I have never ceased to hope that a *rapprochement* between those two Powers might allow us to march with them without having to choose between them, and it seems to me that events are justifying my opinion."

Then the Minister distributed his thanks. Observe again the elegant shades of his style and the increased importance of incidents when marshalled by his brilliant

pen: (14th May) "To M. Gavard (for the British Government). I have just been through some painful emotions; but I am comforted by the long-expected sight of the awakening of Europe. The action of England, provoking the European concert in a common manifestation, struck me particularly. I beg you will tell Lord Derby the feelings of gratitude with which we received the news of his intervention. He will, I am sure, be content to continue in this course which will certainly bring him success and the blessings of the whole of Europe. For Europe, like France, demands peace.

"I am no less thankful for the *rapprochement* which has become manifested on this occasion between England and Russia and of the advantage it has already been to the latter. I know in fact that the Russian Army of the Caspian Sea has received orders not to continue its march towards Merv, and that those instructions were communicated to Lord Derby by Count Schuwaloff, at the time when the latter asked the principal Secretary of State to advise Rome and Vienna to support their joint steps in Berlin."[1]

The Minister forgot nobody. He had proved once more the power of the English Press and, in particular, of the *Times*. "The English Press brought us powerful assistance, whether by following or by guiding the protest of public opinion. . . . Do not leave M. Delanne in

[1] Lord Derby appreciated the gratitude of France. He wrote to M. Gavard (17th May) a *private* letter running thus: "My dear Sir,—I thank you for your letter just received. Please assure M. le Duc Decazes that it is a pleasure, both for myself and for the Government of which I am a member, to have done all that lay in our power for the maintenance of European peace, and to have done so in concert, and for the French nation. We shall require caution and prudence on every side in order to avoid the renewal of the dangers which we have escaped. However, for my part, I shall never consent to recognise the pretended necessity of a European war. It is my personal opinion that very few wars have ever been necessary, and very few just."—(Signed) DERBY.

ignorance of the joy with which we read his last article."

He took the opportunity of dealing thoroughly, in view of public opinion in England, with the question of disarmament which had alarmed him so much. "It is in fact essential that the English Press should not attempt to deal with the question of what is called the question of disarmament. That question does not, cannot exist. If it were called into being, the whole of Europe ought to protest; it would not mean our subjection only, but her own, . . . for, after every one had disarmed, Germany would remain—with her formidable arsenals and her organisation so powerful that she could be mobilised in a week—sole controller of the affairs of the world. . . ."

The letter to M. de Gontaut-Biron, Ambassador in Berlin, is a cry of relief: "At last! we have escaped this terrible danger; my soul was oppressed by it: we were going to be faced with the alternative of an invasion or disarmament. . . . We knew what was meant by the *resistance* of Prince Bismarck, covering himself behind the exigencies of Marshal v. Moltke or the Radowitz philosophical doctrines. . . . The situation seemed so seriously jeopardised that in St. Petersburg it was thought, that the assistance of all Europe was necessary to insure success. The result was immediate. Prince Bismarck felt the coming attack and did not wait for it. He threw back upon Moltke the responsibility of his evil designs, which he denied. . . . You note with great sagacity" (a sagacity calculated to please M. Decazes) "that, through that incident, we gain a triple acknowledgment, that of our legitimate hopes and regards, that of our military restoration, and our peace in Europe. . . ." Then a few useful directions to the Ambassador: "It is important that we should show no bitterness over this incident; I absolutely ignore it when I see Hohenlohe. One of

these days, I will suggest to him that I know that he inspired the article in the *Times*, and that I understood that he wished, by revealing the designs of the military party, to render them abortive. . . ."

But it was naturally towards St. Petersburg that gratitude rose like a dithyramb . . . not without a calculated intent. To begin with, Marshal MacMahon, President of the Republic, who was liked and respected in Russia, wrote to the Czar the following letter, of which the minute is in the handwriting of the Duc Decazes:

"SIRE,—The proof of kindness and confidence with which your Majesty has honoured my Ambassadors in St. Petersburg and in Berlin, encourages me to address to you my warm congratulations for the high and noble influence which you have lately exerted in the affairs of Europe. While all the Powers have a right to rejoice over the success of your generous efforts, France owes to you, Sire, a particular gratitude, for the peace that your intervention has just secured for the world is more necessary to her than to any other State.

"Remembering the salutary example given by your Majesty's Government, France desires but to heal in quietness the hurt which war has caused her, and to resume peacefully her place in the concert of Europe. Your Majesty has recognised our rights and encouraged our efforts. I thank you in the name of my country and in my own.

"Already, at an earlier period, your illustrious ancestor had been able to spare France, vanquished and unfortunate, unnecessary humiliations and a weakening which would have done grievous harm to the balance of Europe. By remaining faithful to that generous and wise policy, your Majesty deserves the eternal gratitude of the French nation, now united with your people by so many interests in common."

In the letter which he wrote to General Le Flô, the Duc Decazes allowed his heart to overflow; the Czar and his Chancellor might find in it that most agreeable form of flattery, which is absolute truth. "The Czar Alexander and Prince Gortschakoff have created for themselves solid and uncontested rights to the gratitude of France. They did in Berlin all that they had promised to do. Let me thank you in your turn, for their attitude is your doing. You had cleverly prepared it by

inspiring confidence and sympathy, by throwing light upon the danger with which Germany threatened the world, and by reassuring them as to our own intentions." . . . (The Duc Decazes knew that General Le Flô showed his letters.) "On the whole, my dear General, and for the first time in six years, Europe has awakened at the voice of Russia. The Emperor Alexander will make his work respected and will continue the habit of watching over it. . . . My dear General, you have the good fortune and the honour of being Ambassador to a great Sovereign, of being treated by him with a trusting friendship, and of having made use of your position for the greater good of your country; this must be a source of great joy to you, and you no doubt feel proud as well as happy."

And what about the Duc Decazes himself, who thus meted out rewards and thanks? The small, sharp-eyed, heavy-browed man, the eloquent and clever Girondin, who had moved heaven and earth in order to come honourably through that ambiguous crisis, was now absolutely worn out. He started for Vichy, ill with fatigue, but already in a fever of new anxieties: for it is characteristic of such imaginative temperaments never to enjoy any rest.

He wrote to M. de Gontaut-Biron (29th June): "I feel that the Chancellor is furious with you, and, I feel quite proud to add, with me as well. We have disturbed his game, and we intend to do so again. . . . As to the situation in itself, you can see what it is. *Some one* cannot console himself for having warned Europe, and thoroughly intends not to repeat that mistake. 'It is by the sound of Prussian guns in Champagne that Europe will learn our designs in the future,' *he* said a few days ago. I think I am justified in saying that the Emperor Alexander left Jugenheim feeling by no means

reassured. As to Prince Gortschakoff, whilst crying loudly that he answers for peace, I know that he whispers, 'Heaven grant it.'"

Prince Bismarck has often denied the intention, generally at that time attributed to him, of seeking to force a quarrel upon France in April and May, 1875. Of those denials, the most explicit is the note addressed by him to the Emperor William (13th August, 1875), in order to refute the allegations contained in a letter from Queen Victoria; also a speech uttered before the Reichstag, in February, 1876; and, finally, the passage in his *Recollections* in which he relates the incident. The above-mentioned note is also to be found in the *Recollections*, vol. ii.

Bismarck's Version of the Incident.

In each case he sets out the same thesis: Prince Bismarck did not desire a war, neither did the German Government; neither he nor the German Government inspired the article in the *Post*. The noise made around the incident was the result of an intrigue woven by Gortschakoff and Gontaut-Biron, with the complicity of the stockbrokers, the "English ladies" (meaning the Empress and her daughter-in-law), and the Clerical party. As to the Chancellor, he was white as snow, the innocent victim of an external and internal coalition.

This explanation raises some difficulty, omitting as it does the steps taken by Prince v. Hohenlohe, the conversations of Marshal v. Moltke, of Herr v. Radowitz, and even the words of Count Münster alluded to in Queen Victoria's letter. Such facts can be attenuated and arranged, but not suppressed. The article in the *Post* was not isolated; it formed part of a "campaign," of a concert, in which the whole official Press joined. How could it be supposed that this should be so without inspiration from the master—more, against his

will? Besides, contemporaries are unanimous in incriminating the attitude of the German Ministry. Even Lord Derby, so distrustful and so slow, was so convinced of the necessity of acting that he did act. It would be an extraordinary thing that every one should have been so completely mistaken.

Prince Bismarck gives another explanation: he allowed things to take their course because he found some advantage in that campaign. Speaking at the Reichstag, he said: "I must say that I did not blame the article (in the *Post*), because, when one can feel that in a certain country (France) a minority is playing for war, it is well to shout very loud so that the majority's attention should be drawn to the fact: for the majority, as a rule, is averse to war." So that the article in the *Post*, by revealing the aggressive designs of "a minority" in France had "saved" European peace! This manner of presenting the case makes the responsibility for bellicose intentions fall upon France and the French Government.

But, here again, facts are more eloquent than words. France did not desire war; nobody in France did. This "minority" mentioned for the needs of the cause, is a pure fiction; assertions of this kind are not proofs, except against those who wished to make them so.

There was therefore something more behind.

The character of the Bismarckian policy, from the treaty of Frankfort until the incident of 1875, was constant. Always and everywhere, the Chancellor showed towards France feelings which bordered upon hostility. He proceeded without courtesy and with the evident intention of keeping France in constant uneasiness and anxiety.

M. Thiers, the Duc de Broglie, the Duc Decazes suffered, one after another, from that scientific bullying. Are we to suppose that it was due to the personal

feelings of the Chancellor, to his state of health, or rather from a real anxiety, a mistaken apprehension of the intentions of France? However it may be, Prince Bismarck was the most insupportable of victors.

The victor did not wish for a second war: he says so, and we must believe him, especially as the reasons which he gives are very potent. Still speaking at the Reichstag, in February, 1876, Bismarck said: "Gentlemen, imagine what the situation would have been if I had come before you a year ago, and if, as at the time when we were threatened by an attack from France, in February, 1870, I had said to you, 'Gentlemen, we must have a war; I cannot very well tell you why; we have not been offended, but the situation is full of perils; we are surrounded by powerful armies; the French army is being reorganised in a most alarming manner. Give me a credit of 200,000,000 fr. for armaments. . . .' If I had come to say, 'It is possible that we may be attacked in a few years. In order to prevent this attack, let us at once fall upon our neighbour and massacre him, in order to avoid death, before he has thoroughly recovered,' it would have been pure folly. You would have sent for a specialist in lunacy, and my dismissal would have been the natural consequence of this declaration." This was true.

Therefore, Prince Bismarck did not wish for a war in 1875. But since everybody, including his most intimate agents, let it be understood that he did wish it, it is equally logical to conclude that he intended, at least, to make it appear that he did.

Further: since it is proved that he practised, so consistently, that policy of intimidation, we cannot but suppose that he had a motive for it, a motive which he concealed, and which lies behind the imbroglio of explanations or the affected silence with which he has obscured the whole incident.

Did he want, as the Duc Decazes supposed, to approach the question of disarmament, or rather to compel a "limitation of armaments" clause to be added to the treaty of Frankfort?

That is a plausible hypothesis, but it is not altogether justified by the facts; no steps, in any direction, were taken towards that end. It would seem that that threat hanging over the debate was in itself but an instrument, a weapon of negotiation intended to alarm men's minds, and that something else was sought for.

The German Government was certainly not sorry to keep the different French Cabinets which succeeded each other in that state of constant terror which, for many years, paralysed politics in France. The complexities of the struggle against the Papacy, with its obvious consequences in Italy, Austria, Belgium, Russia and Germany itself, would suffice to explain the bold vigilance of Prince Bismarck. He wanted to prevent the ever-ready coalition of his adversaries by terrorising those who might have attempted to draw them together.

Possibly also, a more immediate preoccupation might be recognised in the somewhat hesitating and contradictory conduct of the Chancellor. Oriental affairs were already becoming entangled. The dilemma: Austria or Russia, which was the supreme anxiety of his life, was rising up from the facts. He went to meet it, and tried to find out what the feelings of France were, and whether or not she would stand by him in the astonishing manœuvre which he meditated, and which was to end in the Berlin treaty.

If that was in his mind—as it would seem from the veiled attempt made by Prince Hohenlohe after *personal* instructions from Prince Bismarck—it was too carefully concealed to be understood in France.

Besides, France could not, would not understand

Prince Bismarck did not have to do with a malleable and amorphous substance, but with a sensitive nation which he had deliberately and continually wounded for years; people are not to be conciliated by intimidation. He had to fight silent but very determined opinions; finally, his adversary in the game was a timid but very intelligent man who was not likely to be reduced or seduced without resistance.

The Duc Decazes wins the game.

The Duc Decazes had long awaited this moment. He was tired of perpetual threats; that pointed sword frightened him, but also irritated him. He hoped that a favourable circumstance would force his enemy to lunge and to remain with his arm held out, his body uncovered.[1]

The fencing-bout was played not without emotion, but with tact and self-control, an elegant, thoroughly French game. The man of the world defeated the statesman. Such, at least, was the verdict of the umpires. Lord Derby said to M. Gavard: "I do not believe, to tell you the truth, that Prince Bismarck really contemplated such a war; but he wished to prove general opinion, *and he has his answer now.*"

France, Russia, England, Europe itself had agreed to take the measure of the gigantic shadow which darkened European life. Prince Bismarck had seen that in a new military or diplomatic attempt he would no longer find the dispositions which had facilitated his enterprise in 1871.[2]

Whether or not Bismarck wished to throw light upon

[1] See above the calculations of the Duc Decazes.

[2] Austria had intervened in the crisis, but with great reserve. Count Andrassy did not believe in a war. The diplomatic intervention of Italy was even more reserved. The Marquis de Noailles wrote in a private letter (19th May): "I only know what I have heard from Signor Visconti and Sir A. Paget, who, for his part, seems quite satisfied with the reception given by the Italian Government to the English proposition. . ."

the feelings of the Powers in view of coming Oriental complications, he now knew where he stood. The Franco-Russian *rapprochement* had appeared as a possible eventuality, in the course of the incident so brutally raised, so ingeniously magnified, and so happily closed.

III

The Session resumed.

The National Assembly resumed its sittings on the 11th May, when the external crisis was at its height. But, if the anxiety which gripped the hearts of the members of the Government was known and shared by the Deputies, nothing of it transpired in the public debates. A secret understanding had taken place between the leaders and the committees on questions concerning national defence, and very little of that understanding found its way outside.

The Staffs Law had been one of the pretexts of the incident. A proposal (11th May) for the conversion of the Morgan loan—which, among other advantages, had that of securing directly for the Government new credits in the liquidation account, destined for the most urgent military expenses—was carried on the 31st May according to the Government's wishes.

This was in reality a loan, and it did not escape the vigilance of Germany, who added it to its list of grievances against the French Government.

The European general situation was not without some influence over the reciprocal attitude of the parties and groups. The Kulturkampf, the struggle against Rome, was a universal preoccupation, not only on account of the militant *rôle* assumed by the German Chancellor, but as an inevitable consequence of its effect upon the internal policy of other European States. In Bismarck's eyes,

the political *personnel* who had successively been in power since the 24th May was composed of Clericals favourable to Rome. On the other hand, the adversaries of that same *personnel*, who clung to authority in spite of the constitutional vote, accused it of jeopardising peace, either by its attitude or by the mere fact of its existence.

The Left was anxious to put an end to the ambiguous situation born of the contradiction between constitutional laws now irrevocably carried and the survival of an Assembly, hostile in fact to the institutions it had accepted. On the other hand, the Right desired to prolong as much as possible the existence of the Assembly, in the hope of some unexpected hazard which might revive the chances of the ever-regretted Restoration.

The question of the moment in May 1875 was that of Dissolution. On the 11th, the very day when the session was resumed, M. Cyprien Girerd put it to the Assembly. He demanded that the electoral law of the future Chamber of Deputies should be voted without delay, and that the elections for that Chamber should be fixed for the last Sunday in October 1875.

On the 12th May, M. Clapier read his report on the Courcelle proposition concerning the suppression of bye-elections. The Committee were of opinion that they should be suspended "by reason of the prospective General Election."

The Committee found a double advantage in this course: it would meet the danger of seeing the Right, already so much reduced, still more diminished by the expected result of the elections in a dozen Departments; on the other hand, it would interrupt the too manifest current which led the country towards the Republic. The date of the future election was left indeterminate. The Left tried to wrench a precise date from the

Committee and from the Right. In a somewhat confused discussion, in which MM. Clapier, Wolowski, E. Picard, and Henri Brisson took part, M. Raudot, by an allusion which was understood by all, asked the Assembly "not to run the foreign danger of a hasty dissolution."

Approaching Dissolution.

The proposition of the Committee was adopted. Once again, the Right was content with a nominal success; for the moral undertaking to dissolve shortly resulted from the fact that the bye-elections were suspended.

M. Calmon, a friend of M. Thiers, wished to hammer the first nail into the coffin. He drew up a general regulation of the order of proceedings which was to be the programme of the funeral ceremony: the Assembly would bind itself to vote, in the course of the opening session, and before the July adjournment, the complementary constitutional laws; to elect, during the same session, the seventy-five Life Senators; and to fix, also during that session, the date of the elections for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies.

Those were the different stages of the death-agony, drawn up beforehand by an adversary's hand; every word pushed the sword deeper into the bosom of the Right. But what was to be done? The days of the Assembly were numbered: on the 5th July, a meeting of the leaders of the Parliamentary groups practically agreed with the Calmon proposition: the indispensable laws were to be voted before the 15th August; the Life Senators were to be elected during the early days of October; the dissolution and the elections were to take place before the end of the year.

Starting on that programme, M. Dufaure introduced, on the 18th May, two Bills intended to complete the constitutional laws: the one concerning the relations between the public powers; the other, the election of

Senators. M. Dufaure asked that they be referred to the Committee of Thirty—the famous Committee of which M. Batbie was chairman. But that Committee was now dead. M. Batbie said resignedly that the Committee would conform to the will of the Assembly, but did not claim to be honoured with this reference.

After a long and lively debate, the members of the Committee resigned one by one. The Committee of Thirty ended, as it had lived, in a muddle. The Assembly decided to elect another, also composed of thirty members, who would deal with the Bills.

That election took place on the 25th May. The Dissident Right Centre or Lavergne group voted with the Left. Twenty-six members of the Committee were elected by means of this understanding. Only four seats remained for the Right and Right Centre! Where was now that formidable majority?

M. de Vinols writes (p. 266): "The Republic was triumphant. It was a wholly Republican Committee which had to study laws of capital importance. The Government was impressed. The Marshal was angry; he was said to be inclined to resist. Preoccupation and discouragement were visible on the countenances of the Ministers."

The Committee met the next day, and elected M. de Lavergne as chairman. M. Raoul Duval now definitely left the Right Centre and joined the Imperialist group. He received a letter from the Prince Imperial, and became the eloquent leader of the Neo-Bonapartists.

The Religious Question.

A great doctrinal debate now remained. The Right, before its separation, wished, failing a monarchical restoration, at least to lay the foundations of a religious restoration. Now, a Bill was ready, the Education Bill which was to decide the

direction of the souls, not only of children but of men; it concerned the intellectual future of the country, the education of the upper classes; it was intended to bring Science and Religion together, not for strife, but for concord. There is no greater or more touching problem.

A highly religious action recalled, at the same time, the pilgrimage campaign which, immediately after the war, had produced so great an impression. The Congregation of Rites having, by a decree of the 22nd April, 1875, consecrated the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Cardinal-Archbishop of Paris had resolved to make this ceremony coincide with the laying of the first stone of the votive Church of Montmartre. The double ceremony took place on the 16th June, in the presence of 12,000 persons, ten Bishops, and the Papal Nuncio. M. Chesnelong spoke: he said that "in spite of the anguish of the present time, the crowds which were gathered on the Mountain of Martyrs had laid the first stone of a national redemption."

The Bill on Higher Education.

The same idea moved the Right of the Assembly during the debate on the Higher Education Bill. (This was the continuation of the second discussion which had been adjourned on the 22nd December, 1874.) M. Laboulaye had given a verbal Report on the 5th June. The Committee was in favour of the principle of liberty of teaching; but it attempted, rather timidly, to guard against the unconcealed desire of the Right to institute, in the face of the State monopoly, a monopoly for the Catholic Church, alone powerful enough to establish free universities.

On the 7th June, Mgr. Dupanloup ascended the tribune; he claimed liberty, "not as a Catholic, but as a citizen," a cleverly-chosen position. M. Chesnelong compromised it, and revealed the intentions of the Right by demanding for each diocese the right to open classes.

He said, frankly and openly: "We believe that the Catholic Church, to which we have the honour to belong, has in the matter of Education, a proper and superior right which it owes to its origin and which is part of its mission. Wherever the Church is precluded from taking her place in Education, Truth remains in bonds."

The effect of the amendment would be to create the civil individuality of the dioceses. Nothing like it had been asked of any Parliamentary body since the Revolution. The whole modern system of civil society was concerned: it was a return to mortmain. M. Pascal Duprat exclaimed that the Comte de Chambord himself would protest. The Chesnelong amendment was voted. The other cults demanded a similar facility for Protestant and Jewish consistories.

The real bearing of that law, demanded in the name of a Liberal principle, was then exposed: pure clerical reaction.

The vote of the Chesnelong amendment explains the attitude taken by the Left during the remainder of the debate.

The battle took place on the right of conferring degrees. Some claimed exclusive right for the State; others, mixed juries; others, one State jury; others, finally, the right of conferring for free Faculties having been at least five years in existence.

M. Jules Ferry, in a very solid and substantial speech, supported the exclusive right of the State. He quoted the decisions come to in 1872, at the Congress of French Catholics, on the point actually debated by the Assembly. Those decisions were the following:

1. Suppression of the University monopoly, and establishment of the right to found Universities conferring degrees without outside examiners.
2. The same efficiency for those degrees that had been conferred by free Universities as for those conferred by the State.
3. A civil personality for free Universities.

4. The abrogation of the laws and decrees interdicting religious congregations and hampering their rights.

This meant the Church against the State: a State within the State. The Chesnelong amendment was a partial realisation of this fighting programme.

"Here lies the peril," cried Jules Ferry. And he concluded with these words, soon to be repeated by Gambetta's powerful voice: "And let M. Chesnelong allow me to say it,—he is too witty a man not to give the word its purely intellectual meaning: Here is the enemy."

This was clear. Two societies, two *régimes* faced each other; once again discussion led to passion and hatred.

M. Jules Ferry's speech had put life and precision into the debate. Mgr. Dupanloup felt that M. Chesnelong and the authors of the amendment had gone beyond the goal and jeopardised the reform. He declared that the clergy only desired the freedom of the common law.

In spite of an eloquent speech by M. Jules Simon, M. Jules Ferry's amendment was rejected by 359 votes against 306. The Paris amendment, establishing mixed examiners' boards, was voted by 358 votes against 321, with this reservation, introduced by M. Wallon, that the chairman of the board should be a State Professor. The Assembly decided to hold a third reading.

This took place a few days later (8th July, 1875). In a spirit of wisdom, the Committee and the leaders of the Right admitted that the Chesnelong amendment, conceding a civil personality to the dioceses, could not be maintained. The fate of the Bill was concerned, the majority was falling to pieces; Mgr. Dupanloup was anxious and discouraged. Success had to be secured while yet within reach.

Mgr. Dupanloup.

The principle of the conferring of degrees by the State was rejected by a small majority of twenty. The Bill as a whole was carried by 316 votes against 266. The Marquis de Dampierre gives a vivid picture of the Bishop of Orleans: "Mgr. Dupanloup felt so sure that the Bill would be rejected that, after recording his vote, he went away, in despair, to his house at Viroflay. When the law was voted, I proposed to M. Chesnelong that he should come with me to Viroflay to carry the good news; he accepted, and we witnessed the joy of this valiant defender of all great causes. He espoused them with so much ardour that his grief or his satisfaction poured itself out in burning words, which went straight to the heart."

French Catholics hastened to profit by the law. Five free Universities were founded at the same time, at Lille, Paris, Angers, Lyons and Toulouse. In Paris, the Faculty of Law opened its classes in November 1875. The amount of subscriptions towards the University of Paris alone reached more than 2,500,000 francs. It does not seem, after all, that the importance and success of the work have been in proportion to such an effort.

Another quarrel remained to be settled; the Bonapartist quarrel. The Committee of Inquiry into M. de Bourgoing's election had received the papers of the judicial inquiry which had taken place, concerning the Committee of the Appeal to the People.

It appeared from the Report of the *Procureur Général*, M. Imgarde de Leffemberg, that the Bonapartist affiliation existed, but that no committees were composed of more than twenty-one members. "It is an organisation which can be felt," said the Report, "but which cannot be judicially demonstrated." The conclusion was that there was no ground for a prosecution, and a decree to

that effect was issued on the 16th December, 1874. The papers also included a long testimony from M. Léon Renault, Prefect of Police, precise upon many points: but, through the clever tissue of phrases, it is possible to read an obscure quarrel between the old and the new police. First of all, a vote was taken on the election. M. de Bourgoing's election was annulled by 330 votes against 309.

M. Raoul Duval now anticipated the political quarrel. He addressed a question to the Government as to its intentions regarding the Association of the "Appeal to the People."

Bonapartists and the Left.

This was the very point upon which M. Buffet hesitated. He had now to choose whether he would stand with the Bonapartists or against them.

M. Rouher defended himself calmly and, occasionally, with a good-natured sarcasm, which made the members of the Left rise in their seats. Despite the noise and the famous interruption of M. Gambetta: "The blood of the 2nd December chokes you!" M. Rouher continued, and his speech, offering to the Right either an understanding or hostility at the coming election, drew M. Buffet to the tribune. The ground of the discussion was the testimony of M. Léon Renault; the crux of the debate, the judgment pronounced by the President of the Council on the attitude adopted by the Prefect of Police. M. Buffet "covered" the Prefect, whom he praised. But his praise was double-edged, for he immediately congratulated him for bringing an equal zeal to the watching of "all factions." "The organisation of the Bonapartist party is not the only occult and redoubtable organisation which has been constituted in France. The party of a social and cosmopolitan Revolution, I repeat it, also has its managers, its staff, and its propaganda. . . . The Prefect of Police has

said it: 'If the Bonapartist party goes to Camden Place for its password, the Revolutionary party receives its own in Geneva, in London, in Brussels,' and"—turning towards the Left—"I may add, nearer still. . . ." This "nearer still" interpolated in the text quoted by M. Buffet, confounded the Leaders of the Left with that Revolutionary party, of which the speaker had mentioned the external relations.[1]

As M. Louis Blanc—one of those whom M. Buffet indicated in that strange manner—has put it in his *Memoirs* (p. 241): "M. Buffet obviously spared the Bonapartists; it might have been thought that he wished to direct towards the Left the accusation upon which the Assembly had to pronounce."

Loud protests arose from the whole group. M. Dufaure threw himself in the breach. He poured oil upon the waters by a somewhat ironical eulogy of the Prefect of Police, and resumed the attack against Imperialist intrigues.

M. Buffet represented in the Cabinet the "Conservative" alliance with the Bonapartists; M. Dufaure

[1] Subsequent revelations suggested that M. Buffet alluded to some police information which, as Minister of the Interior, he had at that time in his possession. In Lyons, a very active Committee of Radical Propaganda had been organised under the name of *Permanence*. This Committee was connected with some sub-committees, which existed in each *arrondissement*. Prosecutions followed, and as a permanent understanding between more than twenty members was proved (whereas it had not been so in the case of the Bonapartist Committees), the accused were condemned, in August 1875; some to three, others to four months' imprisonment.

Now, during the course of these proceedings, a secret agent of the Prefect Ducros had actually forged some letters signed Gambetta, Spuller, Jules Simon, etc., in order to involve these leaders in the Lyonnese propaganda. . . . Convicted of forgery, that agent, whose name was Bouvier, was condemned, on the 22nd August, to three months' imprisonment. This condemnation justified the campaign led by the Republican Press against the Prefect Ducros, and M. Buffet, after a protracted resistance, was obliged to supersede him at the *Préfecture* of the Rhône Department. M. Buffet was probably thinking of the allegations of Bouvier when he said "nearer still." V. Ranc, *De Bordeaux à Versailles* (p. 365).

represented the understanding with the Republicans against the Bonapartists. Those were the future electoral positions, already outlined within the Government itself.

Gambetta, still in the state of excited vehemence in which he had been thrown by M. Rouher's speech, ascended the tribune. He turned to M. Buffet, and demanded plain speaking from him. "The hour has come to put an end to equivocation, hesitation and misunderstandings. We must know where we are. . . . You have, by a gesture, attempted to identify with outside Revolutionaries, men who are seated within this Assembly. In a Conservative spirit, of which I do not doubt the sincerity, you seek for support on the Bonapartist side, you reconstitute the majority of the 24th May. That is what you must explain."

Was this the moment, even for the Left, to put the Cabinet in question? The thinking members of the Centre consulted each other; they evidently did not follow Gambetta. The latter felt it in the course of his harangue, and, in concluding, he outlined a movement in retreat. M. Buffet observed it also, and took the offensive in his turn. "If M. Gambetta is not satisfied, let him move a resolution of no confidence."

The impulse was given. A vote of confidence in the Government, moved by M. Baragnon, was carried by 444 votes against two. The Left had withdrawn in a body as a sign of protest. M. Rouher and M. Savary both voted for the confidence resolution, as well as M. de Belcastel and M. Jules Favre!

The Cabinet had won the battle. But, thrown back upon the majority of the 24th May, it lost the real basis upon which it had been constituted. It was a Pyrrhic victory.

As a matter of fact, the debate had detracted from every one's credit.

The Bonapartist party had not made more than M. Savary himself by that washing of dirty linen. "From that moment," says one of its apologists, "many people who ostensibly took in the *Ordre*, the *Pays*, the *Gaulois*, or the local Bonapartist paper, had them addressed under cover to their butler or their foreman."

Various Bills.

The National Assembly pushed forward at the same time the preparation and the vote of certain urgent laws. At the sitting of the 20th May, a credit of 1,750,000 fr. was opened to construct in the Palace of Versailles the hall in which the future Chamber of Deputies was to sit, the Opera House used by the Assembly itself being destined for the future Senate.

At the sitting of the 18th May, the third reading of a Bill modifying the military judicial code was carried.

On the 5th June, a Bill was read for the third time, regulating the application of the cellular system in departmental prisons. Prisoners who were undergoing the cellular system saw their term of punishment reduced by a quarter. The expenses necessitated by this change were to be borne by the Department.

On the 26th June, after a somewhat lively debate, in the course of which the Marshal's name was mentioned, the Assembly confirmed the election of Admiral de Kerjégu, Deputy for the Côtes du Nord.

Floods.

Towards the end of June, terrible floods took place in the South of France. The Tarn, the Adour, the Garonne, suddenly swelled by torrents of rain, had ravaged whole districts; ten thousand houses were wrecked, and 437 persons perished. A unanimous charitable impulse brought assistance to the afflicted populations. Marshal MacMahon started for Toulouse on the 25th, and travelled over the area involved.

Subscription Committees were formed in France and abroad. More than 25,000,000 fr. were collected and distributed by the committees under the superintendence of the Marshal-President.

Local Railways.

At the beginning of July, a grave problem of interior reorganisation, which was not without some political and electoral consequences, absorbed the attention of the Assembly: the question of the construction of local railways. Numerous private concessions had been granted by divers departments. The types, directions, conditions of building contracts, etc., all differed from each other. The six great companies appealed to the public powers. Soon, they said, a seventh system will be built, free from State control, and in competition with existing systems. As a matter of fact, the control remained with the State, the departments having no rights of expropriation.

After a confused discussion, the Assembly, on the Government's proposition, conceded to the Lyon-Méditerranée Company twenty-two new lines in the Southern departments, to the Nord and the Picardie-et-Flandres two lines each. On the 4th August, a line round Paris, the Grande Ceinture, was granted to a Syndicate representing the companies of the Nord, Est, Orléans, and Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée.

On the 2nd August, without a discussion, a concession and a declaration of "public utility" were granted to M. Michel Chevalier for a submarine railway between England and France.

The Constitution had to be completed. The law of the 25th February had founded the Republic; now it was to be given a form.

The Complementary Bills to the law of the 25th February numbered three: the electoral Bill, the organic Bill on the relations between public powers, and the Bill

for the mode of election of the Senators. The two last-named had been introduced by M. Dufaure, and referred to the new Committee of Thirty, of which M. Laboulaye was the Reporter.

They emerged without any serious modification. Still, M. Laboulaye was wrong when he said, in his Report on the Public Powers Bill, that it was a mere sanctioning of "political axioms."

After the Republic was voted, the problem of its organisation might give rise to most diverse solutions. Was the Legislative power to be permanent, or not? Should the President of the Republic have the right of veto or not? Who was to be entitled to convene the Assembly? Who to adjourn or dissolve it? Who would have the right to declare war, to conclude treaties? In fact, who was to have "the last word," the Executive or the Legislative authority?

Those are no "truisms." The fact was that the Assembly was weary and listless, bound and, as it were, petrified by its former engagements. On the other hand, the Reporter, M. Laboulaye, and the Minister, M. Dufaure, partisans of a Republican Constitution, understood how much against their interest it would be to raise their voices, to extend the debate and to awaken the passions which now slumbered in semi-impotence.

Hastening towards the End.

And then the vacation was coming, dissolution near. . . . It was better to finish. What was the good of so many speeches since the result was decided beforehand? In those declining days of the Assembly, the gravest decisions were reached, so to speak, hastily and with a feeling of resignation.

Of the various Bills, two were carried during that short session, the Bill on the relation between Public Powers, voted on the 16th July, 1875, and the Bill on the election of Senators, carried on the 2nd August, 1875. As to the

Bill on the election of Deputies, it was only passed on the 30th November, it is true, but it had been reported on by M. de Marcère on the 22nd July. Those three laws, together with the law of the 25th February, 1875, form a whole which may be briefly defined thus: "Organisation of the Republican Parliamentary *Régime*."

At any other time, such subjects would have given rise to long debates: now, nothing of the kind took place; nobody wished for a struggle.

M. Laboulaye spoke for everybody. His report on the Public Powers Bill (7th June) showed a remarkable tendency to present the Republic now being founded as a sort of "makeshift" for a Monarchy: "The provisions of the Bill give to the Republic the guarantees of a Constitutional Monarchy. . . . It is at that price that we shall make the Republic acceptable." Never was a Solon more modest: "Revolutions have taught us not to accord to Constitutions an exaggerated importance. The Constitution which we have voted is far from being perfect; but, on the whole, it secures for the country the guarantees of a free Government." In order to gain more votes, the speaker emphasised the clause authorising revision: "Your share of the work is completed, it is for France to do the rest." The public debate was fixed for the 21st.

M. Louis Blanc had no difficulty in proving that the Republic, as now organised, was a Monarchical Republic; a King, save for heredity. M. Louis Blanc owned to some uneasiness. Nobody answered or contradicted him.

M. Madier de Montjau raised his voice; he protested, appealed to principles. No echo answered the rolling *r*'s and thundering periods of the noisy orator.

But, on the 22nd June, M. Buffet gave himself the satisfaction of saying to M. Madier de Montjau that the

Bill under discussion was "the negation, the direct, formal and absolute contradiction of the principles of the Extreme Left." He supported the Bill in a melancholy tone, as if it were some painful operation to be undergone for fear of worse consequences; that attitude suited the feelings of the Assembly, which would have mistrusted excessive confidence.

M. Buffet, pleased with the success of the plain speaking which he loved, pushed it so far as almost to provoke a rupture with the Lefts and a Ministerial crisis.

M. Laboulaye mixed a little honey with M. Buffet's vinegar, addressing soothing words to the Right and to the Left. The Assembly barely listened, refused to hear M. Du Temple, and finally voted for the second reading *by a show of hands.*

This took place on the 7th July. Momentary attention was granted to M. de Belcastel, who proposed a rider to Clause I.:

> On the Sunday which follows the opening of the Session, public prayers shall be addressed to God in the churches to call for His help in the work of the Assembly.

This was carried. The succeeding clauses were passed one by one as the President read them; there was no debate. The Right felt so uncomfortable that M. Audren de Kerdrel was sent to the tribune to read in its behalf a declaration which was nothing less than a surrender: "We will vote for the Bill. . . . We are Royalists, and, the more we dread the dangers with which Republican principles threaten the country, the more we must attempt to attenuate the consequences of those principles." Alone, the Extreme Right held firm, prolonging the rout of the party of which it was the advance-guard. The Assembly, by 526 votes against 93, decided for a third reading.

The third discussion came up on the 10th July, and did not last more than an hour. A few details were settled. The law as a whole was carried by 520 against 94.

Here are the problems solved in these hurried sittings:

Perennity of the Republic (Clause III).
Permanence of the Parliamentary Power (Clauses I and III).
Publicity of Debates (Clause V).
Right of adjournment, but not of veto, for the President of the Republic (Clause II).
Internal Constitution of the two Chambers.
Constitution of the National Assembly (Clauses XI and XII).
Constitution of the High Court of Justice.
Inviolability of Senators and Deputies.

In fact, the consecration of a mixed, amalgamated authority of both Powers, Executive, and Legislative.

Foreign relations were regulated by Clause VIII., accepted without discussion. "The President of the Republic shall negotiate and ratify treaties. He shall inform the Chambers as soon as the interest and safety of the State permit. Treaties of peace, of commerce, involving State finance, relative to the status of persons or to the right of property of French subjects abroad shall only be conclusive after they have been voted in both Chambers. No cession, no exchange or extension of territory can take place save in virtue of a law. The President of the Republic shall not declare war without the assent of both Chambers."

No debate! The whole foreign policy of a country, perhaps its supreme fate! The exhausted Assembly refused to look its responsibilities in the face.

Preliminary Electoral Bill.

On Thursday, the 22nd July, MM. Ricard and de Marcère introduced, in the name of the Committee of Thirty, the Report on the Bill dealing with the election of Deputies. It was a new organisation of the Universal Suffrage: the principle itself had been laid down at the time of the debate on the Municipal Electoral Law (11th July, 1874), which had been the origin of everything.

The Report departed from the point of view adopted by the former Committee of Thirty, according to which the suffrage is a function, and called it a right.

Therefore, the Electoral Law would be but a mere regulation, every right being above the law which proclaims it: "Every citizen is an elector. This principle admits of no exception save those demanded by the respect due to the law."

Practical applications followed; the term of residence was to be six months instead of two years: "A French citizen is a citizen everywhere: the only object of a determinate residence is to bear proof of identity." In principle, every elector should be eligible.

The Committee admitted plural candidatures; that question, however, was stated in the Report with a certain degree of uneasiness: M. Thiers' authority and Gambetta's popularity gave food for thought in an Assembly inclined, like all collective powers, to vague suspicions.

The imperative mandate was rejected because "it would realise direct Government." The Assembly drew away with horror from anything which might evoke memories of the first Republic; it sought for a medium course between the Revolution and a Dictatorship. Those features are worth noting, for they point to a state of mind which often was quite ignorant of itself. "In the representative system, the election of a Deputy

confers upon him a general procuration in the affairs of the country; in the direct Government system, a candidate is chosen who is to carry out instructions. . . . The provision which rejects the imperative mandate is a renewed assertion of the nature of our Government; it has seemed to us a useful thing to maintain it, at a time when a certain tendency may be felt to bring France back to the political conception of the Convention."

This was aimed at M. Louis Blanc. But the Committee did not go to the bottom of its own thoughts, for a direct Government might, if necessary, even do without a Convention.

The mandate should last for a term of four years.—One deputy, on the average, to every 70,000 inhabitants.—The whole Chamber should be dissolved and re-elected at once. The advantages of re-election in rotation were not denied, but the Committee was struck by its chief disadvantage: a protracted political agitation in the country, and much instability in the Parliament. Besides, that system was already adopted for the Senate: "So that our constitutional organisation, taken as a whole, will present both merits."

Mode of Ballot.

A great difficulty remained to be settled, that of the mode of election: should it be by *scrutin de liste* or *scrutin d'arrondissement?* The Assembly did not pronounce until the November session. The Committee proposed the system of ballot by lists: it was perhaps on that subject, touching upon the very essence of constituent principles, that the Report was expressed most firmly and clearly: "The duty of National Representation, in the higher spheres of the Legislative power, is to deal with the general business of the country, to control the Executive power, to inspire the nation's policy, and, while remaining at one with the national will, to

cause the superior interests of the nation to prevail in all things. Such are the chief outlines of its part in the State; and, in order to fill it, the representation must be independent in its relations with the power, as with the electoral body. The mode of election which, in our eyes, provides representatives most capable of fulfilling this duty is the ballot by lists; it also is that which must seem most suitable to those who are attached to the principles of representative government and to its most perfect form, which is the Republic. . . ."

"The disadvantages of the ballot by *arrondissement* are only too easily foreseen. . . . Between the electors, the elected, and the Ministers in office, an exchange of amenities will take place in which the country, its general interests, policy, and future, will have but a small share. If that system endures for some time, the power will be without control, the deputation without authority, and the representative system will become a fiction once again." (This was an allusion to the Chambers of Louis Philippe.) "If we desire to give back its real functions to national representation, we must withdraw from it the secondary preoccupation of local interests. . . . The representative system has vices, of which the corruption to which it exposes the candidate and electors is the greatest. Shall we not, with the utmost care, endeavour to find means to guard against this corruption?"

In spite of the unmistakable declarations of the Committee, the Assembly hesitated. The Bill was not carried until the November session.

Senatorial Electoral Bill.

The third Constitutional Bill did not present the same difficulties: it was that relating to the organisation of Senatorial elections. The main outlines were drawn, the principles settled. M. Albert Christophle introduced his Report, in the name of the Committee of Thirty, on the 23rd June, 1875. The

Assembly was merely asked to vote; any political or philosophical bearings were passed by, unperceived.

The Constitution of the Senate, that pregnant body, with its double origin, local and Parliamentary, its triennial re-election in rotation, its partial life-membership, its special system of validation, incompatibility, bye-elections—the whole original creation was accepted blindly.

On Friday, the 16th July, the Bill came up for discussion. Without a word, the Assembly decided to pass the first reading.

On Friday, the 23rd July, second discussion. No important subject was raised, only secondary details being mentioned. On the 27th July, by a show of hands, the Assembly voted for a third reading.

The third discussion took place on Monday, the 2nd August.

It was the completion of the Constitution; the final moment had come. Only one voice was heard, that of the Marquis de Franclieu: "The work which is being completed will delete the last traces of our social organisation. All that because we have not restored a Monarchy, which nothing in the world can replace. . . . Unfortunately, those who call themselves Royalists have become transformed into Republicans, saying that the King is impossible. . . . Soon, justice will be rendered to the King. I need not be a prophet to tell you that you will raise the whirlwind and deliver our country once again into the hands of the foreigner, of the Revolution, of demagogues and of an arbitrary Cæsarism. . . . You will answer that we are a minority. It is true, and we own it frankly: but, let me ask you, what have majorities and *plébiscites* produced or proven since 1789?"

How many deputies, in that Assembly which had so long been a "monarchist" and "conservative" one,

agreed in their hearts with M. de Franclieu's words? As to their open adhesion, the figures speak eloquently: the third reading of the Bill was carried, without discussion, by 533 votes against 72.

M. Amédée Lefèvre-Pontalis remarked, in the course of the discussion, that the Assembly was voting with "unexampled haste." "The cause," said M. Jules Favre, "is the prorogation."

"Prorogation," or rather, "dissolution." For the two ideas were connected in the opinion and thoughts of most of the members of the Assembly.

There was indeed some resistance on the part of the Right. Between the 16th and the 22nd July, the question had been debated thoroughly on a proposition by M. Malartre, amended by MM. Feray and Jules Simon. M. Buffet, anxious to spare thé Right, had refused to bind himself. But M. Dufaure finally succeeded in carrying through the proposition of the Special Committee, advocating prorogation from the 4th August to the 4th November, and dissolution to take place immediately on the reopening of Parliament, in order that the new Constitution should begin to work from the beginning of the year 1876.

Adjournment.

A little more "clearing up" was done. On the 19th July, a law was passed raising the salary of Elementary schoolmasters. On the 29th, on the motion of M. Pernolet, it was agreed that, in the future, the *Domine salvam fac rempublicam* should be sung in the churches.

A few fiscal regulations and the Budget for 1876 were also hurried through.

M. Léon Say introduced the new Budget, after making some alterations in that of M. Mathieu-Bodet. It was voted in a few hours, between the 29th July and the 3rd August. It was the first "normal Budget," and provided a surplus of 98,204,823 francs.

A credit of 385,877,000 francs was opened, on the liquidation accounts for extraordinary expenses for the Ministries of War and Marine. The repayment to the Bank of France—that is to say, the amortisation—was reduced by 50 million francs.

Financial Situation.

This Budget avoided the double snare—ever alarming to legislatures, especially on the eve of elections—of loans and taxes. Everything was made easy by the increasing and unforeseen prosperity of the country. Economists shouted a pæan of triumph. Public savings had developed in unprecedented proportions. "French capitalists have absorbed nearly the whole of the French loans—nearly a million of new Railway Bonds—enormous sums for the development of local and industrial undertakings—the Banks refuse money on deposit at 2 and 2½ per cent."

Again, we see large investments made in foreign securities, the 4½ per cent. Russian Loan, City of Naples, Rio Tinto, Turkish, Egyptian and Roumanian. In this manner, France obtained abroad an authority and an influence of which her policy would avail itself some day; she retrieved her disasters—even her moral disasters—by conquering through her labour that new influence which arises from a fortune built on firm and wide foundations. And this progress was accomplished in the same fruitful months of 1874 and 1875, in which a Monarchical Assembly, moved by an invincible power, acted upon rather than acting, was voting Constitutional laws and founding the Republic.

CHAPTER V

THEORY OF THE CONSTITUTION

I. General character of the Constitution of 1875.—Analogy between it and the American Constitution.

II. Precedents.—French Constitutions since the Revolution.—Montesquieu, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Condorcet.—Constitutional experiments of the Revolution.—Imperial Dictatorship.—Return to the Legitimity.—Popular Sovereignty imposed upon the Restoration.—Antinomies of the 1848 Constitution.—Advent of Democrative Cæsarism.—Democraco and the Republic.

III. Doctrines: Aug. Comte, Proudhon, Tocqueville, Duc de Broglie, Prévost-Paradol.—Theorists of Parliamentarism.—Influence of political literature on the National Assembly.—Decentralisation.

IV. Theory of the Constitution.—Popular Sovereignty.—The law of majorities.—Universal Suffrage.—The rights of Ministers.—National unity.—Unity and Liberty reconciled.—Hatred of personal power.—A representative system.—A Parliamentary Republic.—Two Chambers.—The Presidency of the Republic.—The Cabinet.—Reign of public opinion.—History and the Constitution of 1875.—Its merits and defects.

I

THE National Assembly, which had, not without some hesitation and perturbation, declared itself a constituent body, had at last kept the engagement it had made for itself. A Constitution had been voted; but how slowly, how painfully, how incoherently!

Men who lived through those days have preserved an almost painful impression of weariness and trouble. "Do not seek for the principles which guided us," they say; "Chance alone was our master."

And indeed, in the course of those discussions, parties abandoned their doctrines, leaders followed their rank

and file, important questions were dealt with summarily, on side issues; it seemed as if the Assembly foresaw the probable disowning of its own offspring: in a word, to quote J. J. Weiss, "That Assembly spent its years in dreaming of a Monarchy whilst realising a Republic."

The French mind dwells willingly on the comic side of things, and the Constitution of 1875 was discredited from the first, chiefly on account of the conditions under which it was voted.

It was certainly not one of those fair, rectilinear edifices which the theorists of the century took pleasure in planning. It was an incoherent monument of which it would be impossible even to name the architect, every one having had a finger in the pie. The word monument itself scarcely describes that shapeless, nameless something on which the name "Constitution" was not even inscribed, and which was surmounted by the threatening revision clause.

Judgment passed by the Duc de Broglie on the Constitution.

One who was a collaborator in this work—though his collaboration was perhaps forced upon him—the Duc de Broglie, said: "Everything, in the law of 1875, bears the trace of an assemblage of irreconcilable elements, made with unthinking haste, with a view to transitory concord."

The Constitution of 1875 did not spring ready armed from one brain, or from the deliberations of a few men specially entrusted with a mandate; it was, in a sense, the work of a crowd. No Lycurgus, Solon, Sieyès, nor Napoleon elaborated it. As to the Committee of Thirty, it had prepared the exact opposite of what was voted. The decisive majority of one is characteristic, almost symbolical. Never, perhaps, in such an important question, did longer hesitations end in a more doubtful result.

And yet, the latent force which carried the Assembly

beyond its own volition had nothing mysterious about it: it had brought about the birth of the Assembly itself, and its name was Universal Suffrage. But we must admire the adaptability with which this great motive power yielded to complicated and delicate machinery.

At the election of 1871, Universal Suffrage, consulted under conditions of exceptional sincerity, had entrusted the national representation to very honest and very inexperienced men. Tocqueville had already made the same remark *à propos* of the Constituent Assembly of 1848: such was, in fact, the natural consequence of the political crisis which, in France, altered the form of government with each generation. "The members of the former *régime* dare not show themselves," he wrote; "they leave the field clear for 860 tradesmen, lawyers and landowners from the provinces, timid and peace-loving people, full of good intentions, but entirely new to public life."[1]

It was the same in 1871. It is necessary to be acquainted with the anterior life of the men who shone in that Assembly, such as Grivart, Cumont, Tailhand, and even Fourtou and Ernoul, in order to appreciate, through them, the merits of that majority.[2]

The good M. Raudot, the kind M. Laurent, M. Chesnelong himself, were all fresh from their provinces, and somewhat dazzled by the full light into which they had been drawn: but what excellent men they were! It is a great honour for a nation that a representative Assembly should, on two consecutive occasions, have borrowed from it this character of perfect honesty and straightforwardness. 1871, however, differed from 1848. 1848 served as a lesson

Differences between 1848 and 1871.

[1] Comte de Tocqueville, *Souvenirs*, p. 144 *et seq.*

[2] See Grenville Murray, *Men of the Third Republic, Men of the Septennate*; also *Les Hommes de mon temps*, by *Ignotus* (Félix Platel). Paris, 1889.

and an experiment for 1871. The Deputies of the National Assembly had not forgotten the June days, nor the December night; they had seen the war and the Commune. After twenty years of alternating disappointments, sorrow and anguish, they feared for the future of their much-tried country. They were afraid, afraid of others, but also of themselves. What they were most anxious to guard against was the exaltation of theories, the pride of affirmation; in a word, everything "absolute." This uneasiness was the cause that, both on the Right and the Left, there was a prevailing tendency towards reflection, conciliation and tolerance. The partisans of pure doctrines were few and unheeded. None of that enthusiasm for extreme solutions, so often manifested in other periods of French history, was to be met with at that time.

The new legislators' minds were chiefly full of the evils brought upon the country by a personal power. Apprehension and hatred of Bonapartism hung over the Versailles debates, and no barrier was to be omitted from the new *régime* which could form an obstacle to the return of tyranny. Liberalism was the dominant preoccupation, and this was in no contradiction with the aristocratic origin of a great many of the Deputies. A more really democratic Assembly would have inclined towards simpler and perhaps more dangerous solutions.

In studying that Constitution, we must take into account not only what it contained, but what was left out. It was more exclusive than inclusive, more preventive than realising, intended rather to moderate than to excite; it attempted to soothe the nation rather than to exalt it. In the care with which opposing principles were balanced we have the proof of the scruples with which this scientific dose was prepared for a convalescent country.

Nothing is more remarkable, for instance, than the attitude of the Assembly and its great committees towards Popular Sovereignty: they accepted it, suffered it, leant upon it in order to resist contrary systems; but they did not proclaim it, and never appealed to it. At the Committee of Thirty, the debates being secret, men were not afraid to speak out: "Universal Suffrage was a most fatal gift," said M. Combier. M. Chesnelong went further: "The law of equality before numbers is a false and evil law." M. Tailhand and others, even more moderate, joined in the chorus: "Universal Suffrage has been but a peril and a lie," says one; "We must break the tyranny of numbers," added M. Cézanne.[1]

Who would believe that those were the same Deputies who, at a public sitting, voted laws establishing the principle so violently denied in a private sitting? And was it not, on the whole, in the name of Popular Sovereignty that M. Chesnelong and his colleagues opposed to the Restoration of the Comte de Chambord conditions which caused it to fail?

Opinions expressed by the Committee of Thirty.

The minutes of the Committee contain confessions which explain those contradictions. At the sitting of the 26th December, 1873, M. Grivart said: "Of course, the right of suffrage is not an absolute right; but it can neither be mutilated nor suppressed, only organised. If the Assembly modified it in its essence, it would raise a redoubtable opposition throughout the country. The institution of Universal Suffrage is an evil, but it must be preserved, corrected, tempered and provided with a counterpoise. . . ." "Universal Suffrage is a fact: it must be accepted," added M. Merveilleux du Vignaux. M. Laboulaye's wisdom only had to conclude: "If you accept the

[1] The minutes of the Committee of Thirty are preserved in the archives of the Palais Bourbon.

principle, you must rely, more than you are doing, upon the education of Universal Suffrage. You must govern in a popular direction and put yourselves in accord with the nation." Are not these words the very echo of the scruples and uncertainties which filled the souls of those honest men?

As M. Casimir-Perier puts it, they "resigned themselves"; the Right became resigned, and also the Left. "We have given up everything, abandoned everything," cried Gambetta, in the emotion of accumulated sacrifices. And M. Louis Blanc dryly said, even after the vote, "Never did a party abdicate more completely and openly."

If we remember the embarrassment of the authors of the compact before the invectives and objurgations of M. de La Rochefoucald-Bisaccia and M. Raoul Duval: "It is a constitution voted by mutes . . . !" and the speeches of M. Clapier and M. Luro, we cannot but see that those public confessions and sacrifices must have cost a great deal to those who made them.

They did not forget, perhaps—and M. Laboulaye did not fail to remind them—that another Republican Constitution, that of the United States, was born in circumstances no less difficult and moving.

Analogies with the Origin of the American Constitution.

There, also, great examples of abnegation were given by men whose services might have made them more obstinate or more exacting. M. Laboulaye quoted Franklin's fine letter: "When you gather together a certain number of men in order to profit by their assembled wisdom, you inevitably gather together all the passions and prejudices of those men, all their wrong ideas, local interests and selfishness. Can a perfect work be expected from an Assembly thus composed? As for me, I accept this Constitution, because I hope for no better one and

because I am not sure that it is not the best. I sacrifice to the public good the opinion I have formed of its defects. I have never whispered a word of it outside. It is within these walls that my doubts were born, within these walls that they must die."

The walls of the Committee of Thirty heard similar avowals, and the Assembly of Versailles was the theatre of equally honourable actions. It is a precious guarantee for the work of 1875, that such sentiments should have been present at its origin, and that the past should offer such a precedent.

II

Precedents.

The Constitution of 1875 was not the work of one man, neither was it elaborated in one day. It had lain within the bosom of France for nearly a century. Tocqueville had said: "We go towards a boundless democracy. . . . All the efforts which will be made to arrest that movement will be mere halts." Gambetta, addressing the Assembly, said, in his turn: "Do you believe that the opposition of a few Deputies will prevent the consequences of the Revolution?"

All the progress of France within the last hundred years had been towards one object: to organise popular sovereignty in a free country, with a controlled Government. This ideal was that of the nation from the day when it became disgusted with its kings.

Royalty itself had prepared that moment; by constituting French unity, by abolishing all intermediary powers, by raising the isolated dynasty on the vast plain of an equalised nation, by clearing the ground for the night of the 4th August, the Monarchy had simplified the organs of public life, and, at the same time, the perpetual duel between tradition and reform. From the moment

when it alone represented the whole of the past, one stroke was enough to demolish the last rampart.

France had early formed a full, logical and radical conception of a Government in which citizens should be equal and free. The precursors of the Republic were Republicans; Condorcet, who inherited the tradition of the Encyclopædists, wrote before 1789: "Only a slave can say that he prefers Royalty to a well-constituted Republic, where men would be really free, and where, enjoying under good laws the rights which Nature gives them, they would also be sheltered from any foreign oppressor." Such is the French solution of the political problem, after three centuries of absolute power. The debt that the cause of Freedom owes to Montesquieu and to Jean Jacques Rousseau is well known. But people do not realise how much their hasty and undeveloped doctrines retarded the advent of French Liberalism.

For Montesquieu, an aristocrat and a Parliamentarian, the *régime* of Freedom was irrefragably bound up with the existence of an independent nobility and judicial power. For Jean Jacques, a Genevese, and an equalitarian, the problem was solved by good communal or cantonal institutions, in a vast federalised organism. More than half a century was spent in seeking for the means to realise now the ideal of Montesquieu, now that of Jean Jacques, and, sometimes, the two simultaneously.

The English and the Swiss systems were struggling all that time within the bosom of France, shaken with constitutional convulsions of which she knew not the cause. Books have done much harm, France being, as Dupont-White has said, "the first country in the world for thinking like an echo!"

The first among the great European Powers, France desired an organisation at the same time Democratic and Liberal; but that which occupied the greater part of the

nineteenth century was the difficulty, for the nation, to find a just balance. Democracy had wild impulses which went beyond the goal. The Monarchy and the Aristocracy lost no opportunity of provoking a return in the contrary direction.

Every pretext was good enough, every incident utilised, every system tried; but always in vain. A dozen different constitutions were exhausted in the effort.

How dramatic is the history of that century, seeking to attain a political ideal which it had not even owned to itself.

Constitutional Attempts between 1789 and 1870.

The National Constituent Assembly, on the 26th August, 1789, laid down the principle and declared "the Rights of Man and of the Citizen": "Men are born free and equal in rights. . . . All sovereignty resides essentially in the nation. . . . The natural rights of each man are bound by limits determined by the laws. . . . The law is the expression of the general will. . . ."[1] But, led by Mirabeau, Malouet, Mounier, the Assembly attempted to conciliate the crumbling past with the dawning future. Appealing both to English and to American precedents, it declared that the nation, from whom alone all power emanates, should only exert it by delegating it. "The French Constitution is a representative one; its representatives are the Legislative body and the King." Then arises the most arduous problem: how to combine the power of the elected legislative body with that of the monarch? himself independent of any election.

Constitution of the 3rd September, 1791.

The formulæ which attempted to solve it are inscribed in the Constitution of the 3rd September, 1791: One Chamber only, a permanent Assembly, renovated every two years; the suppression of the orders; the combined representation of three distinct

[1] See *Les Constitutions de France*, by Faustin Hélie. Paris, 1880.

elements, numbers, land, and money; the inviolability of the King under the reign of the law; the non-acceptation of the Cabinet system, and therefore the rejection of Parliamentarism; the right to initiate laws given to the King but not to the members of the Legislative body; the right of veto, accorded to the King, to remain in effect during three legislatures, whilst the right of dissolution was refused him; the Constitution not submitted to ratification by the nation; revision only to be effected by a convention and under conditions which gave to the Constitution an eminently "rigid" character; finally, the separation of the three powers, Legislative, Executive and Judicial, borrowed, with all its apparent severity, from the system of Montesquieu, and thus creating a "Legislative" supposed to do nothing but make laws, an "Executive" supposed to have proper authority for applying them, and a "Judiciary" intended to find independence through election.

The inexperience of the Legislators of 1791 is revealed by the vagueness in which they left the right of levying taxes and the use of public finance. They reserved the authority in this matter for the Legislative body, but did not clearly define the mechanism of tax-collecting, of supervision and control. Now, in money matters, if there is no supervision over the collecting and no control over the expenses, there is neither authority nor sanction. What was left in that Constitution, if not in suspense, at least in doubt, was therefore the object itself of every Constitution, the possession of "the last word."

The work of the *Constituante* was a magnificent sketch, but it was only a sketch. Every detail required correcting. At the first contact with realities, the arbitrary mechanism refused to work. A logical force drew men's minds towards a bolder experiment.

The feeling of equality, more deeply rooted in the soul

of the nation than that of liberty, roused it against all hereditary compact, all social distinction. Since the People was to be the Sovereign, wherefore a dynasty? Since all Frenchmen were equal, what was the use of a political machinery calculated to authorise and to perpetuate inequalities?

The Legislative Assembly only met to make those radical incompatibilities flagrant and to make them burst into a supreme conflict. In less than a year, it hurled the nation towards the goal which had seemed so far away.

Law of the 11th August, 1792.

Royalty was abolished. A "Convention" was called together. Under cover of one of those provisional *régimes* which were henceforth to be the transitory and irresponsible instruments of French Revolutions, the Legislative Assembly, by the law of the 11th August, 1792, attributed the right of voting to all Frenchmen having reached the age of twenty-one; it fixed the age of eligibility at twenty-five, made away with the distinction between active and non-active citizens; seized upon the right of appointing Ministers, and thus destroyed the scientific balance which the preceding Assembly had established in social order and in the exercise of authority.

The *Législative* had made the bed for the Convention. It instituted the Government by Assemblies. The People governed through its representatives. Rousseau alone would not have been yet satisfied. He detested the representative system; he wanted direct government.

Abolition of Royalty.

The Convention, logical in its turn, went as far as possible in that direction. The People was not to trust in its representatives, but to believe in itself only. On the 1st April, 1793, the Government by Assemblies was aimed at and struck by the Law on Accusations against Deputies and the suppression of

Parliamentary Inviolability. The *Comité du Salut Public* was established, timidly at first, for one month. A measure—theoretical in appearance, but of incalculable moment—proclaimed the Sovereignty, Unity, Independence, and Indivisibility of the Republic: this affirmed the national unity in the face of the foreigner; but it also maintained traditional centralisation as the basis of the modern *régime;* it meant the acceptance of the whole administrative legacy of Royalty; it was placing the whole social force in the hands of those men who were in power. The danger, in a country of vivid impressions, was now tyranny without the counterweight of political parties.

Already, within the Convention, the majority no longer governed, but the *Montagne;* soon, the Montagne gave way to the *Commune*, to Revolutionary Committees. These acted by means of insurrections and by the manifestations of the *Garde Nationale*, or, as it was called, the People in Arms. This time it was a direct Government indeed. Rousseau would have been content.

Constitution of the 24th June, 1793.

The Constitution of the 24th June, 1793, reduced to a minimum the part of representation. The sovereign authority emanated from annual *Primary Assemblies* which all French citizens might attend. These did not merely vote but deliberated and acted. The People came in order to discuss and pronounce, and to *make* the laws proposed to it by the Legislative body. In reality there was no longer any legislative, executive or even judicial power, since the judges were replaced by arbiters.

The People was to order itself. The primary Assemblies were the permanent organ of sovereignty. They met without convocation, every year, on the 1st May. They elected the Legislative body, which was

but an engine of centralisation, itself merely entitled to choose executive agents from a list drawn out by the departments. The People had a recognised right, nay duty, of insurrection. The control of public opinion was secured by the unlimited freedom of the Press. The Constitution was submitted to the ratification of the people. Thus was introduced into French politics the theory and practice of the *plébiscite* ("that which the People knows"), which ended by checkmating the Revolution.

The Jacobin Constitution.

This Constitution was still too moderate. Though it had been, in a manner, improvised in opposition to the project of Sieyès and Condorcet, it seemed tainted with Girondinism. Robespierre wanted the imperative mandate made liable to revocation; he claimed exemption from taxes for the poor, and reduced the right of property to a simple right of enjoyment. He thought that social reform was the only *raison d'être* of political reform. Politics are not a game of see-saw, but a struggle for life. Saint-Just wrote, in the Report on the Constitution, that the majority had a right to suppress the minority.

The Constitution was adopted by 1,800,000 Ayes against 11,160 Noes. But, before it was applied, it was suspended until the end of the war by the law of the 19 Vendémiaire of the year II. Therefore "until peace," the Government remained a Revolutionary one. "Once in eight days," it had to render accounts to the Convention, that is, to the "Montagne" and the Jacobin party. Seventy-three deputies, who protested, were arrested.

The Revolutionary Government.

The law of the 14 Frimaire of the year II. (4th December, 1793) organised the Revolutionary Government, that is, the government of the "Committees." The latter corresponded directly,

without any intermediary, with the Convention's *Comité de Sûreté Générale*. "Weeding out" was the principal object of the Government's labours; suspicion, its ruling instrument. National intemperance and intolerance were sanctioned. The Convention obeyed the Committees. It acted in turns through the Committee *du Salut Public*, the Committee *de Sûreté Générale*, and the representatives of the people. The right of appointing functionaries and magistrates, which, according to the law, were nominated for election, had been appropriated by the Convention.

It is not necessary to describe the external and internal effects of a system which was nothing but an anonymous dictatorship, making a terror of everyday life, and turning politics into police regulations.

France was saved, but the Revolution was jeopardised, though, it is true, the *régime* had itself proclaimed its provisional character. Though apparently powerfully armed, it succumbed without resistance on the 9th Thermidor. A dominant tyranny, constantly narrowing its circle of recruits, ends by ruling, in the name of the people, for such a small section of the people that it finally becomes reduced to nothing.

The 9th Thermidor.

And now, around that event of the 9th Thermidor (27th July, 1794), everything began to turn as if on a pivot, in the reverse direction. Such is the law of Revolutions; when they have gone beyond the goal, they slowly and progressively retrace their steps along the road which had seen their sudden and violent rush onwards.

The Democracy had been lacking in self-control, or rather, it had allowed its authority to be usurped by the sophistications of parties; it now deprived itself of the means of governing. The first reactionary law was that of the 7 Fructidor of the year II. (24th August, 1794),

entitled "Law of Reorganisation of the Committees of the National Convention." The effort consisted in breaking down the Commune of Paris and the *Comité du Salut Public*. The Convention, that is, the representatives of the nation, again seized upon the power which it had lost. Its rule lasted fourteen months, and may, strictly speaking, be called a representative Government; but it was still a tyranny, since elections were suppressed.

Law against Associations.

The reactionaries had not dared, openly at least, to touch the revolutionary clubs. The law of the 16th October, 1794 (25 Vendémiaire of the year III.), entitled "Law on Associations," attacked them squarely. Not only did it aim at the Jacobins and their affiliated societies, but interdicted, generally speaking, all federations, affiliations, and collective action as being contrary to the principle of unity. This law broke up all unions; it made electoral organisms—what is called in English a *caucus*—impossible; it made of democracy a mere dust. All gathering of citizens was henceforth placed under the eye and supervision of the Executive power. Few legislative measures have had such an influence on the destinies of a country.

Through the fault of the first affiliations which attempted to rule the State, the cause of associations in general was compromised for a long time.

The Convention then placed on its order of proceedings the self-disavowal which forms the second phase of its existence: government by assemblies and the law of majorities being unstable by their very essence. The Montagne had destroyed the Gironde; Robespierre had destroyed Danton; now, the men of the 9th Thermidor destroyed Robespierre, and, one after another, the last remaining Jacobins. Nobody remained but the vilest "plaine," the lowest "marais"; these poltroons survived,

and finally adopted new measures directly opposed to those which they had voted a year before, in the same servile spirit. And this was the most famous, the boldest, of all Assemblies recorded by history.

Constitution of the 22nd August, 1795.

It, too, had to disappear and to utter its *nunc dimittis*. This was the cry, now constantly repeated, "Let the Revolution come to an end!" These Revolutionaries had no thought but to escape the Revolution; the destroyers now longed to create. Their desire took shape in a new constitution, the law of the 5 Fructidor, year III. (22nd August, 1779). The chief character of this Constitution was Fear: fear of the dead Jacobinism, of the imminent Cæsarism, fear of the people, of the assemblies, of the committees, fear of too much or of too little government, fear of all responsibilities. Powers were divided, debates complicated between two Chambers, collective administration, anonymous; it was difficult to tell who governed and who obeyed.

The details were, roughly, as follows: Two chambers, the "Cinq Cents," and the "Anciens," shared the making of laws; they were to be re-elected by rotation, in thirds. The Executive Power was entrusted to a "Directoire" of five members, the figure 5 being repeated everywhere. The ministers appointed by the Directoire did not form a Cabinet; there was to be no ministerial responsibility. Even the command of the Army was to be constitutional and collective.

This Constitution was not a sincere one. On one point only did it show any frankness: in its hatred of socialism and disorder: "No association of citizens may call itself a popular society. No private society, dealing with political questions, may correspond with another, neither become affiliated with another, nor hold a public sitting. . . . In no case may several constituted authorities meet

for purposes of debate . . ." These men had not much belief in the panacea of association!

And this absurd organisation emanated from such men as Daunou, Sieyès, Baudin, Boissy d'Anglas! It is a difficult art.

A ratification *plébiscite* proved, on the 1st Vendémiaire an. IV. (23rd September, 1795), by 1,057,396 Ayes against 49,977 Noes (out of 4,000,000 qualified voters) that that part of the nation which was not disgusted or discouraged with politics, consented to everything, amidst universal weariness and a prodigious indifference.

The First Constitutional Republic.

The first Constitutional Republic lasted, nominally, from 1795 to 1804. In fact, it was a long swaying to and fro of parties seeking for governmental balance, a constant succession of insurrections and *coups d'état*. Nobody applied the constitution elaborated with so much difficulty. Severe laws were powerless to insure obedience.

This impotence on the part of the Government made the nation hunger and thirst for rule. From 1797, the elections were no longer Republican. The Republic only held together by the force of circumstances and by an extraordinary abuse of an ephemeral authority. The nation was treated like a conspirator; distrust, venality, and anarchy prevailed.

The Revolution was not ended, and, however sick of itself, could not end as long as it did not feel "consolidated." Now, with growing passion, it demanded this consolidation, not of itself, but of a strong power. People asked for "order," "peace," and a "civil code;" these were the cardinal points of the new policy and the very terms used in the "Act of the Consuls" of the 19th Brumaire, of the year VIII., which, on the morrow of the *Coup d'État*, entrusted the

The Consuls.

Government to a Consular Dictatorship. The word Consul was borrowed from ancient Rome, the greatest disciplinary tradition in the world. For the first time, it introduced into the revolutionary Acts the conception of one chief, and into French political thought the fateful notion: "Cæsar!"

The phrase which abolished the anterior constitution is admirable in its simplicity, "There is no longer a Directoire." That was all.

The law of reactions was accomplished with surprising logic. France was monarchical five years after 1792; Augereau would have been made a king if Bonaparte had not happened to be there.

Sieyès was too late with his scientific machinery; Bonaparte unhinged it by a mere touch of his finger. But, in that laborious work, there was a real "find": the creation of "national notabilities." To be or to become a "notable," what a career for the ambition of the middle classes! The taste for social distinctions was fast returning.

Now for the instruments of despotism. The Constitution of the 22nd Frimaire an. VIII., by clauses 45 and 56, suppressed Parliamentary control by giving to the Government the right to dispose of the Budget, and by ordering that the Treasury should cease to be independent of the Ministry; the law of the 27th Nivôse an. VIII. (17th January, 1800), suppressed control by public opinion, declaring that "newspapers are weapons in the hands of the enemies of the Republic;" the law of the 27th Pluviôse an. VIII. (17th February, 1800), secured centralisation by placing at the head of each Department another agent with a Roman name, a "prefect." On the part to be played by the latter, three phrases suffice: "Art. 3.—The prefect is alone entrusted with administration. Art. 18.—The prefects are appointed by the

First Consul. Art. 20.—The members of the municipal councils are appointed by the prefects. . . ." Is it not admirable? Louis XIV never knew anything like this!

The Plébiscite. The "plébiscite" of the 18th Pluviôse an. VIII. (7th February, 1800) gave a ratification by 3,011,007 Ayes against 1,562 Noes. "The people knew."

With the Concordat, the amnesty and return of the *Émigrés*, the creation of the Legion of Honour, the Life Consulate and the electoral census, the nation continued its progress towards a Restoration more absolute than the hated past itself.

Heredity restored. The Empire had come. Heredity was re-established.

Yet, the Emperor swore an oath to the nation. Such is the power of words that, in spite of his strength, he could not feel dispensed from pronouncing these, laid in the foundations of the new *régime* like the mine of a future explosion.

"The Emperor swears to respect and to defend equality of rights, political and civil liberty, and the irrevocability of the sales of national land." This oath—and the Emperor's victories—made the Empire popular for ten years. Napoleon was trusted with everything: religion, education, men and money.

He hastily completed his capital work—the Civil Code. The Revolution was beginning to feel sure of itself; it had evolved from many political contradictions one thing of lasting value: a social organisation. The Civil Code was divided into three books: persons, property and the acquisition of property, all three calculated to touch the masses. Relations between man and wife, father and children, elder and younger brothers; inheritance, acquisitions, salaries, the security

of savings, all these things constituted the constant preoccupation, nay the passion, of thirty millions of men, the French nation being eminently *gens œconomica*, not *gens politica*.

The illustrious General who gave to the lawyers of the Revolution the authority necessary to secure for each peasant his small piece of land, the Conqueror who familiarly pinched the ear of his veterans, knew the strength of the bonds which held the people to him; at critical times, he looked towards it.[1]

But he could not escape the fatal tide which, after carrying him in, bore him out. To recapitulate: committees gave place to assemblies, assemblies to personal government, personal government to a dictatorship, the latter had assumed heredity; even this was not enough, Legitimity had to return.

On the 3rd April, 1814, an Act of the Imperial Senate (entirely composed of creatures of Napoleon) declared that "Napoleon Bonaparte is deprived of the throne, and the right of heredity, established in his family, is abolished." Such a scandalous apostasy was necessary in order that Fate should be accomplished. Napoleon had to be proclaimed a usurper by his own people!

Return to Legitimity.

Now, nothing was wanted but a bridge for the return of the "King." A provisional Government built one by hastily putting together the Constitution of the 6th April, 1814, voted under Talleyrand's eye by a Senate of 66 members. "The People *freely calls* to the throne Louis Xavier, etc. . . ." The King was restored, that was enough, let him do what he pleased. . . .

But it was not so. The descendant of the oldest

[1] See the speech of Napoleon to the Fédérés of the Faubourgs in July 1815.

European dynasty, taking possession of his throne before a repentant nation, was himself manacled by that National Will which the very principle of the Restoration should have denied.

Moreover, all the European monarchs, victorious and gathered together in Paris, were obliged to acknowledge this fact of the Revolution which had shaken all their thrones. As Dupont White remarks, "Even on those heights, scarcely haunted by democratic or Utopian theories, men were unanimous in desiring that alone which might close the era of battles and catastrophes; the government of France by herself." Just as the coronation oath ruined in advance the Napoleonic Cæsarism, the Charter (4th June, 1814), even freely given, ruined the Restoration in advance. France was destined for other experiences.

Charter of the 4th June, 1814.

The weight of tradition, of a glorious past, did not seem sufficient; an appeal was made to money. This means, which their ancestors would have thought unworthy, was the supreme resource. By the electoral census[1] the Monarchy became wedded to a Plutocracy, being unable to find support either in an Aristocracy or a Democracy.

The census determined both the electors and the eligible. But, however limited this suffrage, the fact that it was a "suffrage" made all common life between traditional Royalty and the nation impossible.

After the warning of the Hundred Days, Louis XVIII felt the difficulty; guided by his knowledge of the English system, he inaugurated Parliamentarism and put into practice the collective responsibility of the Cabinet. But, once again, the question of "the last word" was left in suspense. In case of a conflict

[1] By this regulation, the heaviest taxpayers were substituted for officials as electors by right; only direct taxes being taken into account.

between the Royal power and the Chamber, the solution was left to chance. The imprudent successor of Louis XVIII undertook to prove that, if the conflict should take place, it would be solved against the monarch.

The Hundred Days.

During the Hundred Days a short and original experiment had been tried. The additional Act of the 22nd April, 1815, had attempted to unite Cæsarism and liberty.

Napoleon had called Benjamin Constant to his side. Illustrious Republicans such as Carnot, had come to the reformed Emperor, to defend France and the Revolution. This counter Holy Alliance had been carried away in the flood. But the attempt had left in the mind of the nation a confused feeling, gathering Parliamentarians, Bonapartists and Republicans together into the same idea of Liberal solidarity and Revolutionary fidelity.

After the defeat of the Legitimity, three parties in succession took up the abortive attempt.

The Parliamentary Liberals, first. An old Orleanist intrigue had been latent since the early days of the Revolution. About a hundred members of the Chamber, led by Lafayette, profiting by those more or less honourable ambitions, imposed a King on the insurgents, and, on that King, a Constitution.

A caste, until then somewhat effaced, seized on the power by means of the electoral census. The Legitimity, failing the nobility, had sought for support in riches; it had thus consecrated the Plutocracy which overthrew and supplanted it. But how narrow was that basis! Tyranny by one class, even a numerous one, is no less a tyranny. Such a Parliament with British institutions, led by Louis Philippe, Casimir-Perier, Thiers, Molé, and Guizot, worked for bankers, manufacturers, and the "ruling classes." It was a business

Government; France became a "firm." A scientific police organisation was concealed behind Parisian intrigue: —in a word, the world painted by Balzac.

In the meanwhile, the nation settled down in peace and the Revolution took its own place. The appropriation of national lands passed the first generation without difficulty; equality levelled everything except great fortunes. A hedonistic semi-atheism bled every delirium of heroism or religion.

In fact the Democratic solution foreseen by the *Constituante* was retarded on one point only: the limitation of the suffrage by the electoral census.[1]

The Revolution of 1848 therefore seemed at first to be a Suffrage Revolution. But it was soon to be seen what had lain concealed under this perverse tranquillity.

The Revolution of 1848.

Few histories are more dramatic, none more instructive than that of the Revolution of 1848. Unexpected, violent, and smiling, like an April storm, it carried off in a whirlwind the throne, the parties, the *débris* of the old system and the foundations of the new. It cleared the place, tried everything, initiated everything, showing by its attempts, failures, successes and blunders, what a Democratic Government might be, and what it ought not to be. It fertilised the germ of the future, and, as in Nature, the "law of the egg" can be applied to the birth, development and abortion of this embryo.

First the Republic; then, Universal Suffrage; a written Constitution; soon, social struggles, undying hatred; finally a usurped and centralised personal power.

[1] Prévost Paradol justly remarks: "French Society under the July Monarchy certainly was a Democratic Society; but it would not be accurate to say that France had at that time a Democratic Government, since the immense majority of citizens took no part either in the election of deputies or in the direction of public affairs."—*France Nouvelle*, p. 5.

The Republic.

The provisional Government, with that enterprising spirit which characterises all provisional Governments in France, proclaimed the Republic and established Universal Suffrage. The Assembly, at its first sitting, loudly confirmed the latent resolution of the nation to live henceforth under a Republican Government. A Constitutional Committee was formed, and ordered to produce a Republican Constitution *at once*. But that Committee was composed of Liberal *bourgeois* and presided over by Cormenin. The era of incoherence had begun[1]; the most dangerous of all.

Constitution of the 4th November, 1848.

Whilst their predecessors had imitated Rome and England, and had felt the influence of Montesquieu and that of Jean Jacques Rousseau, the new theorists took their inspiration from the United States. Tocqueville was now the fashion; he had a share in the making of the Constitution of the 4th November, 1848, which borrowed from the United States, among other things, the institution of one President, elected by the people. But no account was taken of the capital element which was at the basis of the American Constitution, Federation. There, the dispersion of authority and of Governmental or administrative activities protects the Democracy against the peril of tyrannies or dictatorships.

In France, on the contrary, the rooted prejudice—a national one perhaps, a Jacobin one, in any case—in favour of unity and centralisation makes the transplantation of the system impossible. The formula capable of combining Democratic Suffrage and Liberalism with a strong and centralised power was yet to be found.

The "days" of February, 1848, had destroyed or threatened everything save officialdom and State worship.

[1] For the history of the Constitution of 1848, see the *Souvenirs* of Tocqueville and the *Mémoires* of Odilon Barrot.

When Ledru-Rollin was asked what were the powers of his commissaries, he answered, "They will be unlimited." The alliance of lawyers, Jacobins and Bonapartists, of Dufaure, Marrast, and Parieu, inevitably drove that first antinomy into the bosom of the awkward, Neo-American Constitution.

All authority was to emanate from the people. Good. But then, the two powers equally elected by the people were opposed to each other: on one side, the Legislative power with one Chamber only, on the other, the Executive without the responsibility of Ministers.

There was another contradiction more terrible still, in the economic and social facts. Previous Governments, the Hundred Days, the Restoration, the July Government, had introduced a social preoccupation into politics. By the census system, the advent of the middle classes, and the triumph of industry and commerce, they had made the share of riches too large a one.

Consequently, on the other hand, as the Revolution of 1848 was prevented by its principles from escaping the social responsibility brought about by the advent of democracy, it had, logically, to accept, in the name of Society, the "duty of assistance," and to allow to the people the "right to Labour"; in a word, it had to lend itself to a programme of intentions and experiments which went infinitely beyond the means of government at its disposal, and which could only be realised by a communist or collectivist organisation.

How could these unavoidable consequences be reconciled with Liberal impulses and Parliamentary timidity?

A contradiction between the inalienable authority of Universal Suffrage and the delegation, even though a temporary one, of the power to one man; a fatal antagonism between the Legislative and the Executive;

the failure of Liberalism or the failure of Socialism, or that of both—such are the causes of ruin which were inherent in that hasty edifice, built by inexperienced hands.

Reaction.

The impossibility of setting in motion such a machinery, so puerile and yet so complicated, caused the sufferings which, at the time of the elections for the Legislative Chamber, made so many men return to previous systems. A reaction ensued. But France did not desire that either. The nation struggled in the web woven by its own blunders. The Assembly itself did not know what it was, or what it wanted. What a sad spectacle it is to see well-intentioned men treading the mill of their own impotence!

The *Coup d'État* of December 1851.

Disorder reigned. Now the masses, the Government, vested interests, all needed order. One man had in his hands that formidable administrative organisation which had been left to him; he also held the Army which had imprudently been spurred into hostility against the people. Only a very true, very exalted, very far-seeing mind—beyond human strength—could have resisted the temptation. Another folly, born of contemporary error, accomplished, on the 2nd December, 1851, the *Coup d'État*, a dishonourable, shameless, and futureless action. The new Republican attempt had failed.

Nevertheless, a conviction, deep though unspoken, remained in many minds that the Republic was the national wish; also an impression that, if it had failed again, it was on account of particular faults, practical, so to speak, technical blunders, not from an inherent weakness. The Republicans who survived until 1870 preserved, in spite of failure, their faith in the popular *régime*, together with a deep-rooted feeling, that the principle itself being in no wise responsible for errors in

applying it, nothing would prevent another and *a more successful* attempt.

The Second Empire.

Yet, if a test was likely to discourage them, it was that which France suffered at that moment through the Restoration of the Napoleonic Empire. Seven millions proclaimed the heir of the great legend. The latter was perfectly conscious of what he was doing. At home and abroad, he leant upon the support of the masses, universal suffrage and propaganda. The people followed this unexpected continuator of the Republic: it was through a delegation of the popular mandate that he claimed to reign.

The new Cæsar and his Ministers did their utmost to win public opinion. "It always ends by having the last word," said the Emperor on a solemn occasion. He placed himself above classes, castes, Parliamentary coteries or others. It was the conception of a "Chief" fully realised.

Constitution of the 14th January, 1852.

"The Head of the State" (thus ran the Constitution of the 14th January, 1852) "commands the military and naval forces; declares war, signs treaties of peace, alliance and commerce; makes all appointments; issues all regulations and decrees necessary to the application of the laws." He alone could initiate and promulgate laws; he could also suspend them by declaring a state of siege.

There were no more debates. Universal Suffrage worked, very timidly, for the elections of the Legislative body, but with the avowed corrective of official candidatures. Centralised administration had come through all crises, it ruled the present hour.

Prosperity and Victory crowned Audacity. Nobody protested. Did ever tyranny meet with such acquiescence? Save for the quick-forgotten details of the origin of his

power, the "tyrant" was, for ten years, a "good tyrant." Everything smiled on him.

Yet, why did his face remain sad and full of care in the midst of rejoicings and of the adulation of peoples and of kings? His morose countenance was a perpetual interrogation; he doubted still, he tried to read other hearts, to know the secret of other souls. He felt that he was not told everything. And, indeed, in the deepest recess, he would have found an eternal regret.

He wished to live, to last, to hand to his son, if not the full Imperial power, at least the name of Emperor. He had faith in his star and would not believe that in the short term of a man's life, lame justice could overtake him. When he had understood the silence of the crowds and the hesitation of men's hearts, he resolved to meet that which he saw coming. Sovereign master of France, twice proclaimed by a "plébiscite," he gave way of his own accord. He spontaneously descended from the Constitution of 1852 which had placed him on such a high pedestal and began the difficult progress of autocrats towards Liberty. He inaugurated the "Liberal Empire."[1]

The "Liberal" Empire.

What was it but a revival of the reign of lawyers. Jules Favre was a personage; M. Thiers led the way; public discussions were resumed, with the right of interpellation and of initiating laws; ministerial responsibility, badly concealed, was recognised—in a word, the Parliamentary *régime* reappeared. The sad-faced man accepted everything; he called it "crowning the edifice."

But then, what had been the use of violent beginnings, of fifteen years of a military dictatorship? The universal

[1] See the sincere and invaluable work of Emile Ollivier, *l'Empire Libéral*, 10 vols., in course of publication. Also Laboulaye's *Le Parti Libéral*, and Cucheval-Clarigny's *Histoire de la Constitution de* 1852.

dislocation made it obvious that an institution cannot with impunity turn against its own origin. The inevitable issue of such an inharmonious course must be War.

Let not nations and governments make a mistake: their foreign policy can be but the result of their home policy. When they rend themselves with their own hands, their bleeding flesh attracts the enemy's greed. If, hiding their wounds, they try to evade the hungry seeker, their groans betray them and reveal their weakness. It might be said that, in that space of eighteen years, all the systems attempted during the century had crowded into one short trial. Dictatorship, Heredity, Liberalism, all were successively tried anew; but in a lame, curtailed and hesitating form, without roots and without vigour. In the depths of men's souls, the feeling remained which M. Thiers, with his peculiar foresight, made up of science and experience, already in 1855 characterised thus: "As to the future, it belongs to the Republic;" an opinion to which, to do M. Thiers justice, he always remained faithful.

All through the astonishing history of that century, France had passionately sought for a system which might satisfy her intimate aspirations. Hesitating between so many diverse systems, she had, like an aimless, buzzing bee, struck against every obstacle, leaving shreds of her body on every thorn. But then, she had gathered honey at the same time; she had suffered much and learnt much; a new wisdom, a new energy were born of her at the very bottom of the abyss into which she had been thrown by protracted errors.

Weary, but eager still, she pursued a dream—perhaps an unrealisable one—attempting to seize at the same time Liberty, Equality, Unity.

What a series of vain attempts, always ending in

disappointments! The representative monarchy of the *Constituante*, with the kingly *Veto;* the various Republics of the Convention, Communal, Jacobin, Parliamentary, Directorial; Dictatorships, temporary under the Consulate, hereditary under the Empire, Parliamentary during the Hundred Days; Constitutional Legitimity; a *bourgeois* Royalty, a Presidential Republic, an Imperial Republic, an Autocratic Empire, a Liberal Empire,—nothing was right!! Ancient and modern Legislations, English and American systems had been tried. Something was always wanting.

However, certain firm notions had gradually taken hold of men's hearts and filled their memories: French Parliamentarism had taken shape; the old horror of one man's power—be he King or President—which had prevailed during the Revolution, was now forgotten. Universal Suffrage was established; 1848 had hastened the experiment which the Empire itself had but confirmed. Democracy was taking its own place.

A new landscape was being formed; dry lands were emerging from quicksands, on which the future edifice might be built. The ground was ready, and even the building materials: but in what order, in what style, by whose hand, was it to be constructed?

III

Doctrines.

Plans were not lacking. The nineteenth century had seen many philosophers, no longer hidden in the gardens of Academies or within the cells of monasteries, but speaking in public places. A whole category of new sciences had been discovered and called by Auguste Comte by the generic term of "Sociology."

The "Social Contract."

The "Social Contract" of Jean Jacques had been opposed by "traditionalism" expounded by Joseph le Maistre and Bonald. Others, led by Proudhon, had completely wrecked the doctrine of the State. For them, all authority was a usurpation, all property a theft. The true Man should be free, in a free Society. No God, no Master; a pure anarchy.

St. Simon had given a formula to the new Revolution. "The Amelioration of the material and moral destiny of the poorest and most numerous class." Michelet, George Sand, and the followers of Jean Jacques, substituting sentiment for intellectual reasoning, had spread faith in the innate and sovereign goodness of the people.

Political problems, discussed by the Press, excited everybody, reached every circle. About the year 1840, intellects hesitated in spite of all. The philosophical and historical school of the "happy medium" were content with the *bourgeois* solution of the problem posited by the history of France. Augustin Thierry and Guizot admitted that a providential decree had recompensed the labour of twenty generations by the advent of King Louis Philippe. The middle class reigned: the Revolution was accomplished.

Tocqueville.

It was then that a writer, who himself belonged to the aristocracy, appeared, and avenged his rejected class by bringing out with one stroke a fact which was studiously ignored: Alexis de Tocqueville proclaimed the *advent of Democracy*. He spared his readers no uncomfortable result, no unpleasant consequence: "The whole of the present book was written under the impression of a sort of religious terror, produced in the soul of the author by the sight of that irresistible evolution which has for so many centuries progressed through every obstacle, and which can even now be seen coming across ruins of its own

making. . . ." "To attempt to stop Democracy would be to struggle against God himself." . . . "We have abandoned that which might have been good in former times without acquiring that which might now be useful; we have destroyed an Aristocratic Society, and, standing complacently in the midst of ruins, we seem inclined to remain there for ever. . . ." "We are progressing towards a boundless Democracy. . . ."[1]

What a poor attempt at Parliamentarism was this, with its liberty in small doses, its restricted suffrage!

"The king reigns and does not govern"! What a fallacy! Who is to command if the king does not? "The form of Government usually called 'mixed' has always been a chimera to me. There is no such thing as a mixed Government, because, in every society, you end by finding *a principle of action which overrules every other.*" Down with intermediary classes, averages, compromises, "happy mediums." The critic left nothing standing. Down with the rich who are nothing but rich; make room for the People!

In his solemn and logical eloquence, Tocqueville goes so far as to denounce "the greatest sophistry of the century; the union of the State and the Church in an Atheistic Concordat." He refuses to the Voltairean *bourgeoisie*, that hypocritical refuge of a religion "good for the people." A Christian, he demands martyrs. "In Europe, Christianity has allowed itself to be intimately bound with the powers of the earth. To-day, those powers are fallen, and it remains buried under the *débris;* it is living, and it has been fastened to corpses. Cut the bonds, and it will rise up again. I do not know what can be done to restore the energy of youth to European Christianity. God alone can do so; but, at least, it

[1] *La Démocratie en Amérique*, vol. i., pp. 8–15.

depends upon men to preserve for the Faith the use of all the forces which it still commands."

Tocqueville pointed out the inevitable social consequences, fatal to the ruling classes. "Property-owners must not entertain illusions as to the strength of their situation, neither must they imagine that the right of property is an impassable rampart; . . . the last remnant of a ruined aristocratic world, it stands alone, an isolated privilege in the midst of a levelled society; . . . it will now have to bear the direct and increasing attack of Democratic opinions." He said, on the eve of the Revolution, addressing M. Guizot's majority: "When I search different times, different periods, different nations for the cause which has brought about the ruin of the ruling classes, I can see some event, some man, some accidental or superficial cause; but, believe me, the real, the efficacious reason which has caused men to lose their power is that they are unworthy to exercise it."

This *Mene, Thekel, Phares* inscribed on the tables of the charter, is an epitome of Tocqueville's opinions.

A powerful mind and a disappointed heart, full of all the superiority and all the rancour of an abolished order, Tocqueville's action on his contemporaries was that of a historian, not of a man of action; of a destroyer, a prophet of evil, not of a precursor. He went about the streets announcing coming catastrophes, himself destined to perish under the ruins which his vigorous genius had foreseen.

The first edition of *Democracy in America* appeared in 1835. In 1821, M. de Serre and Royer-Collard with him had cried, "Democracy is flowing to the full!" It was but a cry. Tocqueville's book is an acceptation and a demonstration. It proves that a great nation—the American people, already numbering thirty million inhabitants—can live honourably and comfortably under a

Republic, under the *régime* of universal suffrage, after having based public order on the principle of an absolute equality.

If facts are not enough, the author of *Democracy in America* knows how to define the ideal: "I can conceive a society in which all men, looking upon the laws as their work, would love them, and submit to them without difficulty; where the authority of the Government would be respected as being necessary, not as being divine. . . . In such a State, Society would not remain motionless, but the movements of the social body would be regulated and progressive. . . . comfort would be more general . . . there would be fewer crimes. . . . The nation, taken as a body, would be less brilliant, less glorious, less strong perhaps, but the majority of citizens would enjoy more prosperity, and the people would be peaceable, not because they despaired of attaining better conditions, but because they knew how to enjoy good ones."

Tocqueville did not fail also to point out the already salient defects of the Democratic system in the great American Republic. He denounced, from personal observation, the most insupportable of tyrannies, the tyranny of majorities: "What I dislike most in America is not the extreme freedom which prevails, but the lack of guarantees against tyranny. When a man or a party suffers an injustice in the United States, to whom can he appeal? To public opinion? it forms the majority. To the legislative body? it represents the majority and obeys it blindly. To the Executive? it is appointed by the majority and is its passive instrument. To public forces? they are none other than the majority under arms. To a jury? it is the majority clothed with the right of pronouncing judgment. . . ." What guarantees are there?—only a supreme confidence in public wisdom

and good sense, in "the dignity of the human soul." Tocqueville was returning, by an indirect road, to the optimism of Jean Jacques.

But what does it matter! It is not Tocqueville's business to justify Democracy, he is no democrat. Until the last he remained what he was by his origin: an aristocrat, an avowed adversary of the "*bourgeois* comedy," its heroes, and its supers—(what a portrait he has drawn of Louis Philippe in his *Souvenirs!*). But he attained his object. His generation was swayed by his book, and the very men whose part it would have been to resist were led to Democratic convictions or, rather, resignation. Through him, eyes were opened, tongues loosened, the seal of silence broken. After him, a prospect and a future which might have demanded years of assimilation, were accepted without protest.

The Democratic School.

The word Democracy had been pronounced. All resistance was disarmed. The universal attitude was a dumb acquiescence. Napoleonism called itself an Imperial Democracy. As to the opposition, it naturally claimed for itself the prestige of that great word. "All for the people and through the people," such was the motto for which the schools disputed. Already in 1860 there were Professors of Democracy, such as M. Vacherot. Another Professor, M. Jules Simon, in order not to be left behind, lectured upon Radicalism. Radicalism is the final polish laid on Democracy.

Political science was asserting itself in absolute formulæ which it called axioms. With much assurance and much inexperience, *savants*, sitting in their studies, manufactured the future constitutions of France.

In 1863, M. Laboulaye published the *Parti Libéral*. M. Thiers, a deeper and more accurate calculator, praised "necessary liberties."

The *bourgeoisie*, the ruling classes, those who had reigned from 1815 to 1848, who had brought about the 1850 reaction, and who still remained hidden behind the Government of which an Imperial puppet executed the gestures, were seeking a means of harnessing to their interests or ambitions Democracy, that vigorous "extra horse": they thought thus to secure the present benefits of the power and the probable future of the Opposition.

The Duc de Broglie, senior.

Among these bold finesses, clever shades and calculations, a Neo-Liberalism was born, at the same time Democratic and Parliamentary, which intended to realise the obscure aspirations of the nation and of the century. Two books gave expression to it, books which had an immediate influence on the future destinies of France, and on the tendencies of the Assemblée Nationale: the *Vues sur le Gouvernement de la France*, by the Duc de Broglie (senior), and *La France Nouvelle*, by Prévost-Paradol. The political education of the generation which realised the Constitution of 1875 was achieved partly by Proudhon, greatly by Tocqueville, and finally by the Duc de Broglie and Prévost-Paradol.

Prévost-Paradol.

The Duke's book was written in 1861. Printed in a few copies only, seized by the police, it circulated privately and was only published in 1870. As for Prévost-Paradol's book, it appeared in June 1868. The whole crisis of the Liberal Empire and the process by which the Parliamentary Republic was to be born are comprised within these two dates.

The Duke is the more condensed, Prévost-Paradol the more abundant of the two. The former had directly received the English Parliamentary tradition, Prévost-Paradol had come under the influence of the École Normale and of the *Journal des Débats*. M. de Broglie

wrote dryly, for business men; Prévost-Paradol's ornamental prose was intended for young men. The Duc de Broglie had nothing but disdain for all which was not of his world or of his opinion; Prévost-Paradol had a caress for every one he met, for every one he attacked even; his book meant for him a beginning, the other was an end.

On the whole, for one as for the other, the desired Constitution was to be established at the point where former systems and Democracy met.

Neither the *grand seigneur* nor the brilliant journalist insisted upon the very nature of the *régime;* the Duc de Broglie wrote: "Let us say the word frankly: a Republic bordering upon a Constitutional Monarchy, a Constitutional Monarchy bordering upon a Republic, and which differs from it solely by the permanence of the Executive and its constitution; such is the only alternative which is left to lovers of freedom. Any other kind of Republic means the Convention, any other kind of Monarchy means the Empire." And Prévost-Paradol: "We are seeking for institutions equally capable of being adapted to the Monarchical or the Republican form, their sole object being to secure Liberty within Democracy."

If the recital of the events which preceded the vote of the Constitution of 1875 has been sufficiently clear, it will now be obvious that these two phrases explain the whole process of evolution.

The Duc de Broglie and Prévost-Paradol do not conceal their preference for a Constitutional Monarchy; however, whilst the former's eulogy attains the proportions of a dithyramb, Prévost-Paradol is content with a discreet allusion.

Already in 1861, the Duc de Broglie did not altogether reject the Republican solution: "It were wise to prefer the Republic to a civil war." He even furnished

M. Thiers with the formula so often repeated by the latter: "That form of Government will least divide us."

The conditions and restrictions which the Duc de Broglie imposes upon the Republic are the very same which were introduced by the National Assembly into the Constitution of 1875. It is to be noted, also, that he showed himself no more favourable than did his son to the idea of a Legitimist restoration. "A Restoration is the worst of Revolutions."

Prévost-Paradol probed the bottom of things, when —turning away from the somewhat belated system of counterweights and brakes; in a word, of the balance of authority—he did not hesitate to claim for the Legislative Assembly, directly elected by popular suffrage, "the power of the last word," thus describing the practical consequences of this principle: "The preponderating influence (or *the last word* in case of a conflict) being thus reserved for the popular Assembly, with the sole restriction of the right of dissolution conferred upon the Executive . . . that influence will be exercised in three ways; by the voting of the budget, the voting of new laws, and the renewal of the Cabinets."

The idea of both writers was that, in the near future, when the Empire should be overthrown, it should be replaced by a Democratic, Liberal, Representative and Parliamentary *régime;* something like the July Monarchy supported by Universal Suffrage. The Duke himself does not deny that the Chamber of Representatives should be born of Universal Suffrage.

The Duc de Broglie's book was known to a somewhat restricted circle, but that circle was composed of the future leaders of the Assemblée Nationale to come. As to Prévost-Paradol's book, its renown was immense. It was read with enthusiasm by all the young men of the latter days of the Empire, who sought and found in it

nothing but what they wished to find : the most favourable combination for opening public affairs to the *bourgeois* classes through the advent and assistance of Democracy.

All politicians in embryo learnt by heart the passages in which Prévost-Paradol, after Tocqueville, outlined the ideal of a future Democratic Government; his reservations were ignored. Repeated from mouth to mouth, this famous passage crystallised the doctrine and furnished ready formulæ for the Government of a near to-morrow : "If the Democratic Government were not exposed, like all earthly and human productions, to corruption and death, and even to special infirmities and perils which seem, by their greatness, proportionate with its beauty and the attractions which it offers to the heart of man, there is no doubt that we should see in it the last word in civilisation and the least imperfect means of securing the peace and happiness of a commonwealth. . . . What could be more equitable—after the idea of equality has been introduced and strongly established in the hearts of men—than that every citizen should be given a voice in public affairs, for the sole reason that he is a man, and a share in their management proportionate to his merit only, regardless of his birth or riches? No man in such a State is absolutely deprived of power, and each exerts his share of influence on the common destiny, whilst the greatest sum of influence and power accumulates around those who, having received the gift of persuasion, freely attract general confidence. Public power coming from all, at any time withdrawn by all, obtained from all by a few by means of persuasion only, thus concentrated, for a time, in the hands of the best and the most capable, what a spectacle! and how happy would be the condition of the world if Democracy could offer it everywhere!"

Between the two dithyrambs, that of the Duc de

Broglie and that of Prévost-Paradol, there is just room for the oscillations of the National Assembly. The Right may have believed that it followed the Duc de Broglie by voting for the Republic with the conditions prescribed by the authority of the Liberal nobleman; the Left must have thought that it was realising the ideal of the young leader whose early death was so tragic,[1] when, whilst founding the Republican Representative *régime*, it acceded to the concessions which he had considered necessary for the Republic to live. Rarely has theory been so closely followed by practice.

Décentralisation.

During that same period, the latter days of the Second Empire, floods of ink were poured out on behalf of another cause, which afterwards became stranded, though not altogether lost, in the moving sands of Assembly Committees: Decentralisation. Here again, Tocqueville had been the initiator. His apology for the American Commonwealth had opened the source which for many years fed Liberal opposition.

Many things were confounded under the word *Decentralisation*. The Nancy School was chiefly anxious to restore to citizens the exercise of their immediate rights in the management of local interests; it aimed at the destruction of the administrative organisation of the Constitution of an. VIII.

These Decentralisers thought themselves Libertarians and Individualists; in reality they lent a hand to Federalists and Separatists. They also found allies among the Aristocrats, great supporters of acquired situations and high local influence.

Others sought a weapon against the Empire. What they detested in the administrative authority was political interference and official candidature. They claimed more independence for provincial communes in order to obtain

[1] Prévost-Paradol committed suicide in 1870.

more independence for each elector and citizen. Jules Ferry, in one of his double-edged sayings, summarised their thoughts in these words: "France needs a weak Government."

Tocqueville, the Duc de Broglie, Odilon-Barrot and the Nancy School on one side, the Jacobin School, Dupont White and Cormenin on the other, took part in this dispute over one of the many political germs produced in that final period of the Second Empire.

The National Assembly, as soon as it had met, attempted to realise conceptions emanating from some of its most illustrious minds. It was proud of its Liberalism. But M. Thiers, a Napoleonist through literary culture and personal vanity, stood deliberately in the way of the majority's plans; the Paris Commune disturbed the hearts of autonomists who did not recognise the autonomy of their dreams; the practice of authority made of the younger Duc de Broglie the illogical author of the Mayors' Law; the report of the Special Committee, edited by M. de Chabrol, was buried for ever in the archives of the Assembly.

Something was left, however, of so many efforts and eloquent phrases. There remained the law on the organisation of General Councils—completed from the Constitutional point of view by the Tréveneuc law—which accords a certain constitutional power of initiation to Departmental Assemblies, a supreme resource through provincial intervention in the case of a Revolution, or a *Coup d'État*; also that provision of the constitutional law which conferred on the Senatorial Suffrage that specially municipal character rendered evident by the words of Gambetta on the "Grand Council of the Mayors of France." Later, in 1884, another "Mayors' law," amending the Broglie law, came nearer to the forgotten principle and insured a normal working

The Tréveneuc law.

for the Democratic municipalities of the 36,000 communes in France.

IV

The Republic was voted by a majority of one, in a Monarchist Assembly, in February 1875. Let us attempt to look within the souls of the men who, full of scruples and anxieties, determined on that course.

The experience of almost a century, deep and passionate polemics had warned the nation; terrible events had cleared the ground. A choice was now inevitable. Two systems were face to face, frankly and radically opposed to each other.

Nothing was more worthy of respect than the claims of the Bourbon dynasty, such as they were stated in the manifestoes of the Comte de Chambord, but nothing was more categorical: Divine Right and Heredity; a King reigning and governing; no Parliamentarism or Representation; a *régime* neither new nor imported, but antique and national; the people obeying, not deliberately or by constraint, but spontaneously, through love; the throne and the altar united; in one word, the traditional Monarchy, not arbitrary, but absolute.

Revolution or Restoration?

On the other hand, the Sovereignty of the People as a principle, with the law of majorities for an instrument; order resting upon earth and not dictated from above, accepted by free consent, not by obedience; the law within man himself, not external and supreme; political unity, control, elected representation, the whole working through Parliamentary procedure, with Cabinet Government. Restoration or Revolution?

The Revolution won.

But it could not win without the assistance of all its adepts, even the most timorous. Hence the incomplete,

mitigated and, so to speak, floating character of the new Constitution, the result of a mixture of firmness in the principle and uncertainty in its application.

A last phase of Revolutionary crisis, the Constitution of 1875 founded a Democracy.

Plutarch thus defines Democracy, *à propos* of the Constitution of Athens: "The government is common, and the magistrates are chosen from amongst all the citizens."

The Democratic *Régime.*

The salient feature of Democracy is that it denies any distinction between men; it takes heed of no superiority, no inferiority. No heaven-sent chief, no *élite*. Its principle is the *Sovereignty of the People.*

"The Sovereignty of the People," what do those words mean? The word "people" is an abstraction. The People is not a being, a living and dying animal. There is no such thing as the will of the People, the responsibility of the People; the People is constantly modified in its elements, its aspirations and passions; the People of to-day is not the People of to-morrow. Where is the Sovereignty to be placed, since the will cannot be localised?

Besides, the People is not free. Nature, conditions of common life, ancestral traditions, constantly dominate the social body. Individuals bear the weight of heredity. Man has no choice, has never had a choice; he cannot escape the past from which he scarcely emerges; he is the result of his own ancestry. Heredity is the great human law, and that is so true that the law itself, the law which alone maintains social order in the system of the Sovereignty of the People, is but a compromise, an average, obeyed because it is, by a tacit convention, hereditarily received. The social body is an aggregate, of which heredity is the cement. The citizen is not free,

he bears the burden of the whole past and of a social order which he has neither created, disputed, nor accepted.

Man is not free. But, since he claims to choose, what is the value of his choice? The optimism of Frenchmen born of that of Rousseau, rests on the rationalism of Descartes; it affirms the goodness of man and the good sense of his decisions. This is a voluntary illusion, directly opposed to psychological facts; man is still sunk in the mud of his material interests. Occasionally an individual, or even a nation, rises for a short time; but if you ask of all the same impulse at the same time, the weight of the mass brings down the whole, and it falls back, hopelessly, to the same level. A crowd is incapable of logical reasoning, of political foresight; it follows momentary impulses and immediate interests. The popular vote is ever a mere accumulation of erroneous, vacillating opinions, from which political passions extract an average. Now, average means mediocrity.

And then, the people whose will is vague, reflex, ill-balanced, cannot even express it. The suffrage is the law of majorities, you say. Quite so, but where is the majority? The majority is a river which is constantly moving along. The movements of its capricious course are so unexpected that it is impossible to prepare for them. Yesterday 7,500,000 votes for the Empire; two years later, not ten Bonapartists are elected!

Equality exists no more than Liberty or Sovereignty. To deny technical aptitude and superiority, is to deny the light of day; it is to honour negligence and inertia. Take political equality only. Does it exist between man and woman, soldiers and civilians, priests and laymen, officials and private citizens?

Two-thirds of the nation are excluded from the electorate and from total or partial eligibility. Equality

exists neither in strength, competence, authority, leisure, judgment, nor influence.

Democracy is but the organisation of anarchy, "organised disorder." The bee-hive represents order, and order comes from heredity. Such is the reason of all society and of Nature itself; to deny it is to deny the law of the world, the law of God.

There must be an answer to these objections, since, if they were well founded, the superiority of the traditionalist system would have given its proofs, and no one would have thought of changing what was *beatus possidens.* The strongest argument against traditionalism is the fact that it has everywhere failed.

To incriminate human perversity, optimism, rationalism and the Satanic spirit of the Revolution, is to use invective instead of argument. The suffrage is as old as mankind. The first electors, like the first kings, are lost in the darkness of time. The system has spread throughout the Universe; people vote everywhere, and the suffrage tends to become more and more universal, direct and Democratic.

The first Democratic aspiration lies deep in the heart of man: "No constraint." "Our master is our enemy." Such is the permanent cry of Nature.

The optimistic conception of life, so much attacked by the autocratic and aristocratic schools, but which alone supports man and the masses in their slow progress on the hard road of life, authorises this aspiration. Let us believe that man is good; his will, freely expressed, will be good on the whole. It is a constant manifestation of the will to live which he holds from God.

In Society, in spite of incoherencies and apparent contradictions, those who know always end by convincing those who do not. Socrates was right, against those who made him drink hemlock: the best will beat the worst;

good instincts will master bad ones. To register the will of the greatest number is to register the better will; *if it were not so, the world would perish.* Only one power may direct crowds, that which leads them to the light; but this power belongs to nobody. It is for him who deserves it and who knows how to make use of it. Democracy is not "the tyranny of a few haranguers," but the "dictatorship of persuasion." Popular Will expresses itself badly, it has no adequate organ, it is not stable, not self-conscious. Perhaps so, but is not that the lot of human infirmity? is the will of an isolated man, be he a Prince, so sure of itself? when, at what minute of his reign, does the greatest of Kings escape the wiles of parties, the flatteries of courtiers? You fear demagogues; are they worse than Madame Dubarry or the Abbé Dubois?

Another objection is that the law of majorities does not really exist; that Oppositions are oppressed through fear or negligence. That is true, but did you not state that some one must command and some one must obey? Should the minority obey that part of the suffrage which is called a majority? That is the real question.

And here is, now, the answer. Yes, the law of majorities is a law of domination; but that domination is without reproach, for, *as it is always debated, it is imposed only if it is accepted.*

Justification of the Law of Majorities.

The numbering of votes is but a means of proving agreement, and it is so natural to man that he does not even discuss it.

Unanimity consents to the law of majorities because it knows that any portion of unanimity can be, and is, constantly transformed into a majority.

The reason for the universal success of the suffrage is that all agree to agree. Men are resolved to obey, which means both Will and Freedom, a voluntary servitude.

Man consents if he is good and obeys if he is wicked, for a government organised by suffrage offers at the same time conviction and strength. Right means the consent of the parties; the suffrage is the organisation of consent. The latent, hereditary and pacific adhesion to a law voted by a majority, is a fact which is no less traditional than traditionalism itself; it engenders order.

That is why the system is universally adopted; that is why its antiquity is constantly renewed, as all which is deeply human. It is not without some impotence, uncertainty and incoherence, in this, again, human and subject to the law of man. But the suffrage, an accepted sign of the will of the people, is none the less a powerful agent of stability, welfare and progress. Experience proves it, common sense admits it, and reason accepts it.

If the law of majorities be rejected, only one instrument for peace remains in human contingencies: Force. Kings are victors. But Force is the antithesis of Right, it is barbarism. The *régime* which entrusts to Force the power of the last word, is ashamed of its own origin. Why should the law of majorities give way to the law of the sword?

Government by an *élite* has been praised; a hereditary nobility, recruited, if necessary, by merit; a selection working spontaneously in conformity with the laws of Nature, which are also the laws of society.

But this so-called natural law—called a law after Darwin—is it so simple, so strongly demonstrated? Is it not already shaken by an attentive scrutiny of facts? Blind selection tends to exhaustion, and often works in a retrograde manner.

Remember the great historical bankruptcies of aristocracies: Carthage, Venice, the Middle Ages, Poland. The error of the so-called Social Darwinism is that it tries to ignore the strong example provided by Nature,

viz. a prodigious superabundance of forces in action where the choice takes place. Selection means election. There is no aristocracy without a democracy. The wider the field, the more vigorous the choice. The brilliant and fragrant flower of aristocracy blooms only if rooted in a powerful soil. Hereditary aristocrats are usurpers. Society must rest on its basis, which is the People.

For the organisation of the suffrage, the Constitution of 1875 accepted, or rather maintained the most simple mode: direct universal suffrage for the legislative body, departmental and communal assemblies. This was the logical sequel of the thesis which declared the Sovereignty of the people.

Direct Universal Suffrage was constituted as the basis of political order, fully and entirely, without restriction, deceit, or false pretence. Every male French subject aged twenty-one, who enjoyed civil rights, was admitted to the electorate. Conditions of residence, or the exclusion of certain special categories were justified by reasons which had no connection with political capacity. There was now no census, no classification, no privilege, no representation of minorities. Later, the National Assembly pronounced for the *scrutin d'arrondissement*, which set, as directly as possible, the elector in contact with the elected.

It was therefore the widest, boldest, frankest application of the elective system.

Universal Suffrage.

It was on this question of Universal Suffrage that the battle of the classes took place. But the Right of the Assembly scarcely dared to open the fight, and did not keep it up. Universal Suffrage was consecrated in the course of the debate on the local electorate. For the last hundred years, French political revolutions took place on questions of suffrage. It was time to have done.

Two very strong reasons pleaded for Universal Suffrage: it was founded on justice; since each citizen contributes towards public resources, why should not each citizen have a voice in the chapter when there was a question of making use of them? Besides, Universal Suffrage is an agent for certain pacification; since there is no possible recourse beyond the suffrage of all, what reason should dissenters give to disobey the law? In the opinion of Gambetta, and of those who voted with him, the establishment of Universal Suffrage was the end of the Revolution, perhaps of all revolutions.

Others even had thought that they could see a Conservative principle in Universal Suffrage. This was the opinion of M. de Lavergne, of M. Duvergier de Hauranne, of M. Thiers himself.

They argued from the incontestable fact that the number of property-owners in France is far greater than that of non-owners.

Experience shows that in England and in Belgium the extension of the suffrage towards universalism has marked a period of stability for Conservative parties.

In France, the movement, on the contrary, has been slowly but continually Leftwards. The practice of the system has realised, in its tendencies, the previsions of those who fought against it. Universal Suffrage, they said, is a class suffrage, the suffrage of the lower classes. Taine calculated that fourteen electors out of twenty were peasants and labourers; three were *demi-bourgeois* and three *bourgeois*. M. P. Ribot drew an analogous conclusion: "For whoever knows the human heart, it is impossible to doubt, by comparing these figures, that the number of those who have nothing or very little is so great, and the number of rich people is so small, that the first can easily coalesce victoriously against the seconds."

Let us quote a whole page, written in 1874: "In order not to lose ourselves in vague suppositions, let us examine what are the changes which could be brought about *to-morrow* by the advent of a Radical Chamber through Universal Suffrage. One of the *first* measures taken by the new chamber would be to decree the separation of the Church and the State, and the suppression of the budget of Worship. The second measure would be the suppression of Congregationalist schools. . . . An income tax, even a progressive one, would be voted. . . . Do you think they will stop there? You have had the separation of the Church from the State, you will have the persecution of the Church. . . . You have had free, lay and compulsory Education, you will have atheistic Education; that old doctrine will be renewed which made of the school-master the adversary of the priest; who knows whether the law of 1850 will not be abolished in order to restore a monopoly to the University? Who knows if free schools will not be suppressed under the pretext that their teaching is contrary to modern principles? In the family, who knows that Divorce will not be re-established? For property, what will prevent the abolition of inheritance, the expropriation of factories for the benefit of the State, the re-establishment of national workshops. . . . In the Army, the officers would be appointed by the soldiers. The Army itself, which is in bad odour, might be replaced by a National Guard. Magistrates would be elected by universal suffrage.

"There is no longer a nobility, but there are riches which establish between men a difference at least as great; why should not the people do, against the *bourgeoisie*, what they had done in 1793 against the nobility? . . . . Finally, we have another danger to fear from Universal Suffrage: it may make us fall under

the yoke of despotism. Who does not know that anarchy brings despotism? . . . Universal Suffrage is in opposition with all Liberal doctrines. Liberty is too delicate a thing to be grasped by it . . . it prefers extremes. Now, it will throw itself into the full licence of anarchy, then, called back by fear, it will accept all the shackles of despotism."[1]

Here is a denunciation. Note that these apprehensions do not prevent him who felt them from bowing to necessity. "If Universal Suffrage did not exist, we should hesitate a great deal before establishing it; now that it has entered into our habits, we could not, without the greatest danger, modify it suddenly."

A period of thirty years has shown what was well founded in these previsions and criticisms and what was mistaken. The Duc de Broglie, in his melancholy old age is credited with the following words: "Perhaps we were mistaken as to the time, but not as to tendencies and general direction."

But Time is the very thing which tempers such pessimistic previsions. Delay ripens problems and unravels difficulties. Shall the social body be condemned to immobility?

It is true that the Democracy of Universal Suffrage has Radical aspirations; it demands assistance from all citizens equally. But the spirit of justice reigns everywhere, not only in Democracies but in Monarchies also. The feeling of relief and relaxation which results from the free practice of Universal Suffrage has made it possible to tide over many difficult moments. Strife between classes, which is but one inevitable form of the struggle for life, has not become exasperated in those countries where popular sovereignty prevails. On the contrary.

[1] Paul Ribot, *Le Suffrage Universel*, 1874, p. 183.

Have not the ruling classes themselves given proofs of selfishness, exactions and imprudence? have they wisely administered public wealth? have they not introduced into public life the insolent claims of their pride and their blue blood?

And Cæsarism? Once master of everything, has it not lost everything? Are 1815, 1830, 1848, 1870, without reproach?

The reign of the *Bourgeoisie* under the Democratic *régime.*

Thirty years have passed since the Constitution of 1875 was voted. Now, government by the lower classes, said to control the suffrage, has not even been organised. There is not, far from it, a Labour majority in the Assemblies. The *bourgeoisie* obtains seats, posts and honours. If it has been badly treated, it only has itself to blame; the vain and impatient ambition of its well-educated members has proved more dangerous to Society than the envy and cupidity of which the poorer classes are accused.

Thirty years of Democratic authority, too often irritated by blind provocation, have not sufficed to accomplish the programme which was intended, in 1874, to be realised *at once.*

It can certainly not be asserted that Universal Suffrage has falsified all the pessimistic predictions of the ruling classes, but it would be unjust to conclude that it has disappointed all hopes. Thirty years of public peace brought to a close a century which had begun in the midst of wars.

Paris has lost the habit of barricades and gives in everyday life an example of toleration. There, all parties are welcomed with a wide and cordial urbanity.

Evolution is slower in the provinces, where passions are quicker, more irritable, contacts rougher. And yet

the lamentable and grotesque portrait which Taine drew, in 1872, of the peasant elector would not be true to-day, as any man will assert who has shaken hands with those honest men who are the foundation of French Democracy.

"When they vote, they know not what they do." Thus speak defeated candidates. It is true that they do not always choose the best men. But where, in what Utopia have public functions always been attributed to the most worthy?

The crowd of ten million electors, spread over a huge territory, witnesses every day, through the columns of the Press, the drama which is acted on the public stage, and preserves self-control in spite of promises, programmes and propositions. The people bear hereditary, military and budgetary burdens, the increased price of necessaries, the growing difficulties of life, with a patience born of their faith in the voting paper placed periodically in their hands.

Can we be astonished that they should persistently incline towards measures which seem to promise some improvement in the condition of the poor, that they should be deceived and betrayed by the promises of ambitious or violent dreamers? The Sovereign Democracy has its flatterers and courtiers, but also its absorbing and immediate occupations. It is a miracle that it should, in spite of all, keep a reasonable line of conduct and a hand on the helm amidst the storm of events.

It is well, however, that its friends should warn it of the danger to which its very strength exposes it. That enormous strength, indeed, can only be tolerated if it remains tolerant. The will of the people, though a Sovereign will, can become a law only if it is in conformity with reason and equity.

The power of majorities is a means, not an object. The object is the Law, which is determined by consent.

Minorities are always worthy of respect, precisely because they are minorities: they consent to what they do not wish.

The worst misfortune which could befall a society would be that the conscience of the masses should be warped in such a way as to make them look upon their Sovereignty as Infallibility and upon numbers as upon reason. The most odious of tyrannies, the tyranny of parties and Assemblies, would follow such a mistake. No recourse would be possible against Universal Suffrage, thus unchained; like a child-Hercules, it would break everything around it.

Tocqueville has described, after early and striking example of abuses in American democracy, that terrible abuse of the power of majorities. He shows us independent citizens kept aloof from public posts, merit and fidelity suspected, envy, hatred and prejudice arresting the finest careers. "You must think as the majority does, or be kept away from everything. . . . The honest man gives way . . . he sinks back into silence. . . . The master does not say, like the ancient despot, 'Think as I do or die;' he says, 'You are free to think otherwise than I do; but from that moment, you are a stranger among us. . . . You may keep your privileges, but, from this moment, they will become useless to you; if you aspire to the mandate of your fellow-citizens, they will not give it to you, and if you merely ask for their esteem, they will even pretend to refuse it. . . .'" If such abuses become inveterate, if the majority knows not how to resist this immoderation, towards which it is drawn by the coalition of inferior instincts, then woe betide the Suffrage, woe betide Liberty! "If Liberty should ever be lost to America, we must accuse the

omnipotence of the majority, which will have driven minorities to despair and forced them to appeal to material force. Then will anarchy be seen, but it will come as a consequence of the most terrible of despotisms, the despotism of the majorities."

National Unity.

It was also by a logical sequel to anterior facts, by a natural movement, an undebated decision, that the National Assembly consecrated, in the Constitution, the principle of National and Governmental Unity.

During the war, Separatist manifestations had taken place in the South; the Commune had been a blind embryo of Federal organisation. Between Paris and the provinces, a latent antagonism existed which passions and polemics excited and exaggerated. The very fact that the Assembly remained in Versailles, raising one capital against another, was a significant one. The crisis had certainly been a dissociating, disconnecting agent.

However, the re-establishment of order had had a consolidating and reconstituting effect. The Decentralisation campaign failed because it was suspected of Separatism. France clung the more ardently to Unity that she had more suffered from mutilation. Remember the words of Gambetta to the men of Savoie, as they turned their eyes towards free Switzerland: "France, now that she is beaten, humiliated, overthrown, must, more than ever, be our Fatherland."

That spontaneous and unanimous acquiescence of the country and the Assembly in the eminently French and traditional principle of Unity determined one of the salient characteristics of the Constitution.

In the United States, when the work of the Constitution was in preparation, the same question had been raised; but, there, minds turned spontaneously towards

the contrary principle of Federation. The difficulty, in America, had been to wrench from the different States the necessary amount of common sentiments to procure Unity. "What!" said Patrick Henry, "you begin your Constitution by saying 'We, *the people of the United States*, have decided, etc.' You should say, 'We, the States!' For there is no American People, but only thirteen Sovereign States. You usurp the Sovereignty when you speak in the name of the People."

It had been intended to constitute, in the centre, a Power sufficiently mighty to hold together these ever-dividing elements. But this power was not to have too much authority or too much unity. It ended in entrusting the President with the direct, full and entire delegation of popular authority.

In France, the principle is different: Unity is a tradition. The nation, offering herself to her leaders in a spontaneous impulse, has too often thrown them into the misrule which comes from an enormous power, irresponsible and uncontrolled. France trembled like a timid bird in the hollow of her kings' hand.

However, the enlightened minds which led the National Assembly had been warned by past experience of Monarchical and Imperial Autocracy, by the invasions of 1814–1815, and 1870–1871, and by the Revolutions of 1789, 1830 and 1848; what they now most feared was to fall again into the ways which had led the country to those catastrophes. They were full of shame, horror and hatred for personal power, despotism and dictatorships.

Therefore, the national will tended towards Unity, whilst national prudence demanded Liberty: these two logically contradictory tendencies tried to become combined in the Constitution.

No provincialism and no central authority—this was the double object of the Assembly. It may be said that

its masterpiece was to evolve a lasting system which reconciled such irreconcilable elements. To sacrifice everything to counterweights and control, to oppose one power to the other, dispersing responsibilities, to discourage private ambitions—perhaps private energy as well—to prevent, by putting various obstacles in the way, any ascent towards authority; those were the pre-occupations which, perhaps unconsciously, guided the hand of the Constitution makers.

Unity was maintained, Administration stands, but at the cost of a reduced Governmental authority. Rarely was so complicated a pagoda erected to lodge so mean a god. The State-Providence had been so detested that the new Legislators were content with a representative Ikon. The supreme post became a resting-place; the appearance in that principal post, "the Presidency," of an energetic will and exceptional activity would be considered as surprising and somewhat alarming; a temptation to break bonds might arise. In hatred of the Empire, and perhaps also of M. Thiers, the Constitution took care to protect the country against personal ambition, even supported by merit and services. It placed obstacles before all dictatorships, even that "of persuasion."

A *bourgeois* Constitution, indeed, garnished with good intentions, small apprehensions, clever precautions and hidden jealousies—a carefully-built house, with no large windows, no beautiful views, but well protected against winds and storms, where the nation might slumber and rest after the adventures and romantic escapades which had exhausted and compromised it for nearly a century.

Power, at the same time one and limited, such was the master-thought of the Constitution. Through another consequence of the same principle, the system was a representative one.

A Representative *Régime.*

The People as a whole was qualified to decide in what concerned it. But the People cannot, by reason of the large area of land, meet in one public place and hold debates; it therefore delegates its powers to its "elect."

If the system of representation had not existed, the *bourgeoisie* would have invented and imposed it. No other could be more favourable to its ambitions. In effect, it ends normally in the institution of a governing class, of an elective, if not hereditary, aristocracy (and this explains the virulence with which J. J. Rousseau opposes it in anticipation).

The Assemblée Constituante, in 1871, had proclaimed this axiom: "The French Constitution is a representative one." Similarly in 1871 and 1875. There was not even a discussion. How could an Assembly conceive any other solution than the reign of Assemblies?

In a Democracy, the power may be exercised directly: by a *referendum.* It may be handed once for all to one person: that is the Cæsarian *plébiscite;* or else it is entrusted to deputies for a time: that is the representative *régime.* The first system was impracticable, the second odious; a choice was soon made.

Let us see, now, the consequences. The most important of all has been mentioned; the constitution of an *élite,* of a class, a category of citizens amongst whom a choice is usually made. *Bourgeois* or *semi-bourgeois,* men of a certain education are chosen for their capabilities, fortune, ambition, or fluency.

Another consequence is that Assemblies reign; the Government therefore has a collective and deliberative character. Politics become a vast palaver; discussion comes before action, and form before substance. Procrastination is the rule and action the exception. Democracy is indeed "a reign of haranguers" with this

difference, that the latter, instead of addressing the people, must meet the greater demands of a more refined audience. The words which hail political talent are the oft-repeated: "He is a good speaker."

The name of the new Government was to be: *The Republic.*

Democracy in a representative form of Universal Suffrage is not necessarily antagonistic to a Monarchy. One Monarchy was quite ready, which was neither the traditional Monarchy nor the Empire—it was a Constitutional Royalty, the July Monarchy.

Orleanism, like Democracy, invoked the Revolution; both were "soldiers of the tricolour flag." The Duc de Broglie (senior) had passionately desired this. His son's opinions were the same as his own. With a little more perseverance and finesse, the Monarchists of the Right Centre and of the Right would have managed Universal Suffrage in such a way that it would not have been absolutely contrary to the maintenance of a ruling class, and still less to the establishment of a traditional and Liberal Monarchy.

The Republic won, but by so little that it is necessary to show why and to explain its success.

The Republic was voted for by a fraction of the Monarchical Right, because the latter was in an *impasse;* because the attempt at a "fusion" had failed; because the Comte de Chambord was not popular and would not renounce the white flag; because the Comte de Paris, in those circumstances, thought it wise and honourable to retire. But the Republic was also voted for a deeper, more intimate reason, which inspired the Assembly and which is the philosophical result of anterior acts: the fear of an independent and dominating power, whatever its reason or origin might be.

The philosophy of that period is "no constraint." Prudence was ever a characteristic of the middle classes. A double apprehension prevailed at that time, of wars abroad and of the Commune at home. Masters were disliked, M. Thiers as well as Napoleon III; they were thought cumbersome, if not dangerous. On the other hand, it was necessary to maintain order, and the *bourgeoisie* always feels more reassured when the power to do this lies in its own hands.

Men wished to live, merely. That was no time for Super-Men or heroes. The Republic appeared like a guarantee of unity, a refuge of rest; a Republic was therefore created after the model of the Assembly which voted it, well-balanced, timorous, and, so to speak, attenuated.

Proudhon had declared, under the Empire, that progress would be made *in the direction of a diminution of the State*, and it was so. This phase of French history realises an observation of another philosopher, Nietzche: "Modern Democracy is the historic form of State Decadence."

Remember Jules Ferry's words, under the Empire: "France needs a weak Government."

Under divers pretexts, the National Assembly rejected in turns every essence of a strong power: Legitimity, first; then Heredity; finally Authority.

The Republic was to be Parliamentary; this was the last consequence of anterior work and present dispositions.

The maintenance of the Presidency (in spite of the 1851 experiment), was a sacrifice made to the idea of Unity. But Parliamentarism was an immediate corrective and ready restraint for the nominal chief whom the Nation was still willing to accept.

For the first time, the word "Parliamentary" was coupled with the word "Republic."

A Parliamentary Republic.

The word "Parliamentary" was sufficient to point out the essential trait of the Constitution: power belongs in the last recourse to Parliament; and, since it is composed of two Chambers, especially to that which was directly appointed by the people, the Second Chamber. The latter governs, and does so by means of an organ which it appoints, and of which it disposes *ad nutum;* a responsible Ministry, otherwise a *Cabinet.* The institution of a Cabinet is the very essence of Parliamentarism.

At the time when the Constitution of 1875 was voted, this thesis had been freed from the layer of blunders under which its first commentators—to begin with Montesquieu—had hidden it. English writers, Bagehot, J. Stuart Mill, Cornwall Lewis; French writers, Tocqueville and Prévost-Paradol, had bared the mainspring of the organism. Bagehot, in particular, whose authority was appealed to in the course of discussion in the National Assembly, had brought to the problem two elucidating assertions: one that *the Cabinet is a Committee of the Legislative body, chosen to be the Executive body;* and the other, that the much-vaunted separation of powers is so little characteristic of Parliamentarism that, on the contrary, under that *régime*, the *three powers are combined into one narrow solidarity.*

The men who voted the Constitution of 1875 were therefore warned. They knew that Ministerial responsibility consecrates at the same time the subordination of the Executive, and the dominant authority of the Assembly born of popular suffrage. Whatever they may have said or pretended to believe, they could not close their eyes to the words which they had inscribed in the Law of the 25th February, 1875, and which were even more decisive than the word Republic: "Each one of the decrees of the President of the

Republic must be countersigned by a Minister. . . .[1] The Ministers are *together* responsible before the Chambers for the general policy of the Government. . . ."[2]

The "Executive" may struggle; it is in tutelage. Its hand is held by the Ministry which applies the Presidential-Ministerial signature at the bottom of the documents, and which answers for everything before the Assembly. The President does not command; his pen is enslaved. The "Committee of the Legislative body" reigns in his name.

This rigorous interpretation of the Constitution was not accepted without some hesitation. M. Dufaure asserts that the "three powers are distinct, independent in their action, exposed to mutual contradictions, but forced to agree finally in the interest of the State."

It is the theory of *brakes* and *counterweights* set out by Bagehot in 1865, which attributes to each of the three powers a rival authority independent of that of the others, neither of them obliged to give way, and all three reduced to impotence as long as they do not agree.

Whatever may have been in M. Dufaure's mind, that system is not that of the Constitution of 1875, for the will of the popular Chamber nowhere meets with an equivalent and efficacious counter-will.

The Senate.

The institution of the Senate is a favourite objection. It was, and has remained, in the eyes of its founders, "the organ of resistance," capable of correcting or opposing, if necessary, the blunders of the lower Chamber. If the Chamber is an instrument of progress, the Senate is the instrument of conservatism. Has not an effective superiority been conferred upon it by the demand of its equal and parallel assistance in the making of laws, the recognition of its competency even in budgetary matters, the right attributed to it of deciding

[1] Clause 3. [2] Clause 6.

whether or not to appeal to the country in case of a conflict with the popular Chamber, and, finally, by the dignity of High Court given to it, which involved a special judicial authority over exalted political personalities?

Assuredly these are great powers, but they are *powers* and not *the power*. The constitutional intervention of the Senate in cases of conflict, is a means of procedure, not the habitual and normal practice of government. Dissolution is but an appeal to a higher sanction; even admitting that the Senate might overthrow a Cabinet, it could not create and support another against the will of the Second Chamber. The special right of the Senate becomes exhausted, but not that of the people and of its direct representatives.

The President. As to the Presidency of the Republic, the efforts of the first Cabinets which followed each other under MacMahon would have led to the belief that it represented according to the Constitution, a "strong power," an independent power with a special authority, able, if necessary, to communicate directly with the country, above and beyond the Chambers. This was the theory laid down by M. Buffet, in his speeches of the 22nd June and the 7th July, 1875. It had been the secret thought of the inventors and supporters of the Septennate; later, it was the inner thought of the authors of the 16th May. But, in spite of comment and allegations, however sincere, this system had been rejected by the majority.

The Constitution did not intend that the Presidency of the Republic should be a "strong power"; it made of it a "weak power." After the vain attempt of Marshal MacMahon, who was entitled to claim the special authority of the Septennate, the Presidents who succeeded him have so thoroughly understood the intentions of the Constitution that they have resigned themselves

to it, and have allowed, in practice, the last traces of authority left to them to become annihilated.

The President has no effectual force; he cannot act alone; his principal part is to supervise, to counsel, to conciliate. The refusal which he might oppose to the will of his ministers could merely be suspensive. Decision is not left to him, and, in spite of appearances, when a Cabinet has to be constituted, he has no choice in the matter.

The nomination of another dictates his. The name of the President of the Council, of the Head of the Cabinet, who will draw up the list of other ministers, must be on his lips even if not in his heart. Even in that supreme and unique work which is his special work, he has to give way.

What is he, himself, but a wheel, an organ, an instrument, a procedure, so to speak? He is very like that solemn and figurative personage which Sieyès had invented and of whom Bonaparte spoke so coarsely.

To quote Proudhon again: "Another proof of the ignorance of Napoleon and of his copyists is the brutal fashion in which he spoke of Sieyès' *Grand Elector* who was none other than the constitutional Monarch. It is a very great part, the mainspring of the system, the absence of which causes the failure of all Republics." Proudhon's sententious formulæ haunted the minds of many of the voters in the Assembly.

It is true that the inevitable subordination of the Executive Power and the relative inferiority of the Upper Chamber did not appear at once as the distinctive traits of the Constitution of 1875. They were hidden at first by the assertions of the principal actors. The supporters of the Septennate cried so loud that "the Septennal Republic" was a sort of semi-Monarchy that they ended by believing it.

The personal situation of Marshal MacMahon, the origin of his power, explain the illusions entertained by several parties as to the real part of the President. Certain ambiguities of interpretation kept up the misunderstanding. But those very ambiguities provoked the violent shocks which caused the Constitution itself to reel on its basis. The crisis of the 16th May was caused by different interpretations of the question of Presidential powers.

The issue was obvious. Universal suffrage is not to be bound down by artful wordings. When such a force has been introduced into the constitutional machinery, the latter must obey or explode.

Now that the hereditary principle was set aside, there was no power left in France which could find support anywhere. From the very first trial, the 1875 Constitution, the Universal Suffrage Constitution, brought out its full effect, and the Marshal-President had to submit to the will of the People expressed by its elected.

In normal times, the will of the People is manifested by the accord which becomes established in the whole of the representative organism, that is, by harmonious voting between the two Chambers.

The deduplication of the representation into two Chambers is not a diminution of powers for the Legislative body, such as was desired by a large section of the Right and the majority of the Committee. The latter had dreamt, it is true, of making of the Senate an instrument of reaction; but these views did not prevail. The institution of the Senate may be a precaution, it is no restraint. Born of the suffrage, like the popular Chamber itself, the Senate is in nowise qualified to rise indefinitely against the decisions of the Chamber. In practice, the Senate represents delay, not appeal; its counsels are not judgments.

The frank and cordial collaboration of the Senate and

the Chamber of Deputies is, in reality, the natural result of their common origin. Gambetta had guessed that it would be so, being in this infinitely more perspicacious than that section of the Right which believed itself to be creating a Senate for purposes of resistance; and that section of the Left which dreaded to find, in the Senate, an obstacle.

The work of the two Chambers organised itself normally and peaceably. The habit grew of seeking and finding agreement on the most arduous and most important subjects: the voting of the Budget, the wording of laws, the election of the President of the Republic. Daily practice brought about necessary compromises through mutual concessions.

In fact, unity and concord soon became the rule between the two Chambers; at the very first constitutional crisis, when the President of the Republic attempted to measure his power against that of the Chamber, the Senate, having once granted Dissolution, gave the President and the Cabinet to understand that it could not be relied upon to continue the conflict. And the fact is all the more remarkable that the President of the Republic, at that time, was Marshal MacMahon, and the President of the Senate the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier.

The Chambers therefore govern; the Executive—ill-named—has very restricted powers. Nothing remains of the famous "separation of the three powers." Administrative powers, either political or judicial, are subordinated. Authority is handed by the People to the Chambers, and by the Chambers to the Government.

The key of the structure is the "Cabinet," the responsible Ministry. Again to quote Bagehot: "By the word *Cabinet* we understand a Committee of the Legislative body, chosen to be the Executive body." As a matter of fact, it would be possible to be even more categorical

and to say that Parliament, governing not only as a Legislative organ but as an Executive and Administrative organ, such as the Senate in ancient Rome or in Venice, chooses this "Committee" merely as an instrument of preparation, of initiation and execution. The authority of the nation over itself is delegated, by the Assembly of its mandatories, to that organ, which exerts it under the control of the Assembly whilst the supreme Magistrate preserves but the form and honours of the Power.

The Cabinet.

The Ministers assemble around the President of the Republic, in whom resides the majesty of the nation. Opposite the President of the Republic, sits the President of the Council: he is not only the head of the group formed by his eleven colleagues; he is the real delegate of the Assembly and of the country, the man chosen by the desire of the moment. If he be a man suited to his position, his is the hand that holds the sceptre. The two Presidents, seated face to face, represent experience, prudence, and self-control. The seat on the right hand of the President of the Republic is that of the Minister of Justice, Justice being the *raison d'être* of every Government; on the left hand, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, national existence being, after Justice, the chief care of the State; then comes the Minister for War, then the Minister of Finance. The other Ministers are seated according to their importance and the chronological order of the creation of their Departments.

They deliberate in a low voice, without secretaries or minutes; it is a familiar and confidential conversation, in which the fate of the Cabinet, and hence the destinies of the country, are discussed simply and naturally. Each Minister speaks in his turn, according to precedence. He submits the affairs of his Department to the opinion of the Council. Useful observations are exchanged. If unanimity should not be obtained, a vote is taken, after

which unanimity is taken for granted, for each decision of the Council binds all those who have taken part in it.

The President of the Republic presides; he asks questions, and makes no mystery of his opinion; he counts the votes, and here his part stops. The decision is not his. He has to sanction it, however, and, at the end, or during the course of the sitting, he countersigns the decree already signed by one of the ministers. A resolution carried by the Council of Ministers then acquires the value of a public act.

But it has to go through another test. If the measure is likely to create a constant relationship between citizens, it is complete only when it becomes a law. It is, therefore, submitted as a Ministerial Bill to discussion in Parliament. It is unnecessary to detail the well-known procedure of Parliamentary discussion and the promulgation of laws.

The question of Ministerial responsibility is raised when the bill is voted. If it is rejected, the Ministry, no longer enjoying the confidence of Parliament, is overthrown. It falls, and that is all.

If the decision of the Cabinet Council is but a simple measure of administration, it comes into force from the moment when it receives publicity in the *Journal Officiel* or in the *Bulletin des Lois*.

But again, in this case, Parliament may, by means of questions or interpellations, assert its control over the specially *executive* acts of the Cabinet. After an interpellation, the vote which maintains or overthrows the Cabinet asserts the agreement or disagreement between the Chambers and the Ministry; another instance of Ministerial responsibility.

Thus, by this very simple machinery, every action of the Cabinet passes through the sieve of Parliamentary

approval or disapproval. According to the Constitution, the President of the Republic is not responsible, save in a case of treason. The Ministers, on the contrary, are responsible to Parliament, and that is precisely what constitutes their subordination. If the actions of the Cabinet are not ratified, at least in silence, the disavowal of the Chambers dissolves the Ministry. These men without ancestors, without personal power, "mushrooms grown in one night," return to the crowd of citizens whence they came. Another leader, chosen by the President of the Republic, according to the indications given him by the vote, assumes power in order to carry out the present wishes of Parliament.

The whole working of a Democratic and Parliamentary Government is set out in this short sketch. The people, having chosen its Magistrates, takes them and leaves them the equals of other citizens. But it is through the authority of Representation, more accurately speaking, through the Chamber of Deputies, that the Cabinet is instituted in its turn, and entrusted with the sceptre of Government.

So we have now the full extent of the rights of Parliament: the election of the President of the Republic; participation in the election of the members of the Upper Chamber; the discussion and voting of the laws; the right of declaring war; the ratification of treaties; the annual vote of the budget; the initiative in matters legislative, political and budgetary; a special administrative power; the right of interpellation and of Parliamentary inquiry; the indirect nomination of the President of the Council and, consequently, of the Cabinet; control over the Government itself, and the administration, by the constant action of Ministerial responsibility. All these constitutional rights have grown with time and practice. Such is the radical conception of French Parliamentarism.

Let us not forget a last constitutional provision, which secures for Parliament the supreme authority in the State: Permanence. It was said at one time in France, that "the King never dies"; it would be true to say now that "Parliament never dies in France." Certain measures are taken which make it impossible that the whole of Parliament should ever be dissolved.

The Senate, being renewable every three years by one-third, is legally indestructible in its institution. But there is another permanence, that of the sessions, of Parliamentary action.

No power in the State can oppose the meeting of Parliament, particularly of the popular Chamber, on certain fixed dates. The Chambers are fully entitled to meet on the second Tuesday in January, and their session lasts at least five months. The President has, it is true, a right to adjourn the meeting, but the adjournment cannot exceed the term of one month. Besides the necessity of obtaining the annual vote of the budget, the Executive power finds in the Constitution another obstacle to a possible desire to administrate the country without Parliamentary control. "The President shall be bound to call a meeting of the Chambers if he is requested to do so, during the interval between two sessions, by an absolute majority of the members who compose either Chamber." Therefore the Chambers, even absent, may, if occasion should arise, defend their own threatened authority. In every way they can command "the last word."

Finally, as a supreme resource, the Tréveneuc law (5th February, 1872) contains a provision by which, in case of an illegal dissolution of Parliament, the General Councils have the right and the duty to organise legal resistance, to call the Chambers together, and to decree a supreme appeal to the country.

Every precaution is taken to bar the way before a personal power or a Dictatorship.

The Government of united France is eminently collective and representative. The Parliament, with the Cabinet, its organ of initiation, execution and administration, could apply to itself the words of Louis XIV, "*L'État, c'est moi.*" Let us, rather, apply to it the saying invented for the English Parliament: "It can do everything, save change a man into a woman."

Parliamentary Responsibility.

Is that Sovereign authority, in its turn, without any responsibility? Who will judge the judges? *Quis custodet custodes!* The Constitution offers no answer to this question. The Deputies, the Senators even have no legal responsibility for their votes; they are under no control, but that of the suffrage which elected them. The only threat they have to fear is that of not being re-elected.

And does the elector in his turn incur no responsibility on the subject of his vote? If he has made a mistake, if the country is suffering, minorities oppressed, the independence or welfare of the nation jeopardised, where, when and to whom shall he render accounts? Never, nowhere, to no one. Public prosperity, national interest, justice itself, have no other recourse but the revenge of facts and the verdict of History.

And yet, there remains one supreme appeal which is not mentioned in the Constitution, but whose unmentioned part is never absent from the thoughts of public men: Public Opinion. Public opinion is at the same time the conscience and vital instinct of the nation; it is the expression of its will to live. The People, being a Sovereign, is also a Judge. Sir W. Anson, in his book on the British Constitution, recognises that there is no sanction for the actions of the power, in a Parliamentary

régime, but social conscience and national good sense. Tocqueville also placed there the supreme recourse against the errors of a Democratic *régime*. Without any hesitation, he demanded entire liberty for the Press: "The more I look upon the independence of the Press in its principal effects," said he, after J. Stuart Mill, "the more I become convinced that, amongst moderns, that independence is the capital and, so to speak, constitutional element of Liberty."

Liberty of the Press.

And this does not mean the Press only, for Public Opinion means more than the Press; it is a stream infinitely more powerful, larger, and more equitable than that which supplies the newspapers. Flowing from the very soul of the city, it owes its strength to the social authority of which it is the perpetual and simultaneous emanation.

The ancient *agora* has now, thanks to the modern instantaneity of communications, become widened as far as the boundaries of a great country. The People, present, though remaining by the family hearth, judges its masters and judges itself. It is for the People that debates take place; for the People that that immense apparatus is set in motion which makes public every action, every saying of those who are in authority; for the People that those solemn Parliamentary inquiries are opened, when the last constitutional resources are exhausted, armed with only one weapon, one sanction—Light.

Blame, even unexpressed, falls upon the guilty like a sentence; public esteem soothes many a good citizen whom party caprice has hurt. Public opinion often takes up past trials, ever dissatisfied until justice has been reached, because justice, for nations as well as for individuals, means the same thing as happiness.

It is that authority of public opinion, invisible though

present, which has relieved the greater number of modern constitutions from a frequent recourse to brute force; it comes to the assistance of wisdom and persuasion and imposes them upon united interests and passions; it was owing to it that that principle of "no constraint," considered at first as a bold and impossible novelty, became introduced into politics.

Faith in the justice and equity of the greater number is tacitly included in the Constitution of 1875, which inaugurated a sincere application of Universal Suffrage; that alone was sufficient to enable it to endure and to cleanse it from the taints and blunders which the weakness of men and the difficulty of the times were bound to introduce into it.

Let us now consider the Constitution of 1875 in its relations to French History.

France, in the middle ages, rose upon the ruins of local sovereignties. The task of the French kings was the achievement of unity by the destruction of intermediary powers and of privileges.[1] They received, for that purpose, full powers from the nation: the confidence of the latter inspired the theory of Divine Right, and dictated the practice of absolutism. But royalty was but an instrument; at the moment when the last traces of Feudalism disappeared, the monarchical spring broke and the nation, left face to face with itself, sought, through a series of contradictory experiments, for a constitutional organisation.

The stages of that quest are known. However, that part of the nation which had led the fight against the last adherents of the old *régime* remained master of the situation, and organised, for its own profit, a Government and the *Bourgeoisie*.

[1] See *Histoire du Cardinal de Richelieu* (by the author of this work).

The *bourgeoisie* is not a separate class: it is constantly recruited amongst the lower classes. Like the Roman "knights," it is that part of the people that has become rich and in possession of public funds and savings, a singular advantage at a time when fortunes were becoming prodigiously developed. The reign of the *bourgeoisie* was a Plutocracy.

The Revolution of 1848, caused by an internecine quarrel, made the first breach in the power of the *bourgeoisie*. The Second Empire followed, hesitating between the *bourgeoisie* and the people. Born of fear, it lived as long as fear lasted, and foundered on the day when it declared of its own accord that there was nothing more to fear.

Then came the Constitution of 1875; it marks, first of all, the bankruptcy of the *élites*, the failure of Aristocracy, of Plutocracy, of Royalty, of Cæsarism. None had rendered the services which might have been expected, none knew how to preserve the country from revolutions, dissensions, fatal wars or invasions.

From those catastrophes which closed the nineteenth century, a feeling of lassitude remained with the nation, of distrust towards those rulers who had ruled so badly. The People wished to manage its own affairs; but, knowing that some leaders were required, still sought for them among those who had usually provided guidance.

The Constitution of 1875 marks, in the history of France, an effort at conciliation between the national and unitarian traditions of the French people, its Democratic sentiments, the authority of acquired fortunes, and, finally, the aspirations of the masses. It is a Constitution of equilibrium, a difficult and delicate enterprise, excellently defined by Gambetta when he said that it "consecrated the union between the *Bourgeoisie* and the proletariat."

It was born in times of perturbation, of uneasiness and remorse, of full reaction against political romanticism. Under the wide word "Republic" it called all to the defence of the common patrimony; it was a work of resignation, of reconciliation, perhaps also of disillusionment.

Ancient Constitutions proposed to enhance the glory of God, or at the very least the glory of the Empire; they assumed proud devices such as "One faith, one king, one law," or "For God and the Fatherland." Republican Constitutions also appealed to the ideal. That of 1791 began by the "Declaration of the Rights of Man;" that of 1848 was promulgated "Before God and in the name of the French People." There was nothing of the kind in the Constitution of 1875; it was of the earth, earthly.

Supple and easily revisable, it showed great preference for gentle means, patient and long-suffering methods of procedure. There was no violence about it, no oath was required, no inquisition imposed on citizens who did not welcome it. Gambetta opened to all the arms of the "Athenian Republic." None were excluded but those who refused to be included, none hostile but those who were disappointed at not being given special rights.

Equality is indeed the true realisation of a Democratic Government. But there also lies the danger. This universal "admissibility" takes for granted not only universal good intentions, but universal aptitude; there is some indifference in so much toleration. Remember the words of Taine *à propos* of the men of the Commune: "I say that there is no superiority or speciality; I, a workman, am capable, if I wish it, of being a foreman, a magistrate, a General, etc."

Already the great minds of classical antiquity, who

had so much suffered from the abuses of Democracy, Plato and Aristophanes, had denounced the danger.

To deny authority and capacity, to turn voluntarily from competency and ability, to write the name of Aristides on the oyster-shell, may be a precaution against the ambition of the "best" *aristoi*, but it may also be making room for the worst. It is to sanction envy, the vice of Democracies; it is to prepare the ground for an even more redoubtable evil, Corruption.

Let French Democracy beware . . . it is attracted by glamour, and watched by unscrupulous people. Enough Plutocracy remains, in this recent Democracy, to expose it to temptations and to set a price upon public infatuations.

If such a misfortune were to take place, if, by a perfidious usage of new means of influence, and in particular of modern publicity, some one were to grasp and to hold the soul of the nation, the evil would be without a remedy. Since everything rests upon public opinion, if public opinion were to become corrupt, everything would give way all at once.

Another defect must be noted in the Constitution of 1875. Gentle and humane in its principle, sufficient and convenient for the habitual train of life, it might be found wanting in times of public peril and tumult, of terror and anguish. Voted on the morrow of the defeat, when France was meditating upon her sorrows, it might prove ill-adapted to crises when the fate of the country would be at stake; it does not provide against external danger.

Would French Democracy be able to follow up protracted designs, to prevent panics, to guard against the surprises of ill-fortune? Would it know how to choose a Chief, perhaps indispensable, and trust in him? . . .

Ostracism.

A man had defended national honour; he had been the founder of the Republic. He bore the triple crown of genius, eloquence and goodness. Having attained the power of which he was worthy, he preserved it for three months and died shortly afterwards, struck to the heart by the shafts of a hostility which nothing but his death could appease.

A man who foresaw the future of the world tried to force towards new paths the hesitating will of his country; this robust hand firmly held the reins; he ruled, careful of his duty. But he did not trouble to please his contemporaries, and they detested him. He fell, on the unverified rumour of a panic which had not even been perceived by the band of pirates who had caused it.

The fall of Gambetta and the unpopularity of Jules Ferry are sins against Justice and against Public Interest for which the Constitution of 1875 is perhaps responsible.

Between the blind confidence of party spirit and a distrust envenomed by detractors, Public Opinion floats in uncertainty. One half of the nation is systematically left out by the other; hatred accumulates and forces are wasted.

What would happen if, suddenly, in peace or in war, all the strength of the nation were required in one supreme effort to cover the frontier or to save the soul of the country?

To conclude: The Constitution of 1875, voted by an Assembly, consecrates the power of Assemblies; the work of *bourgeois*, it leaves a remarkable amount of authority to the *bourgeoisie*: but the latter understood that it could hold the management of affairs only by opening wide doors to Democracy.

The system has endured, being at the same time solid and ingenious.

However, the Constitution, a work of conciliation, resignation and timorous prudence, has preserved those characteristics: it lacks an ideal conception, an exalted goal; even national instinct, in its higher tendencies, is rather repressed than stimulated.

The Constitution is calculated to restrain rather than to exalt. It has worked admirably whenever Cæsarean enterprises have had to be resisted; it has fallen neither into Absolutism nor into Anarchy, but perhaps it has not, hitherto, sufficiently encouraged great works or great sacrifices. A realistic, comfortable *régime*, it has endured. . . . It has endured; and that, not only because of the suppleness of its organisation: deeper reasons have ensured the stability of the system.

No social form can subsist which does not rest upon the idea of Sacrifice. Society is an abnegation; the individual offers the best of himself upon the altar of the Fatherland, and it is by this daily burnt-offering that the Fatherland remains. Society is the sum total of private disinterestedness. Now, the Constitution of 1875 presents a constant and reciprocal sacrifice, consented to by the two parties in the contract, the old ruling classes on one side and the People on the other. The Constitution will take root if this sacrifice becomes permanent and if the nation feels that what she gives up in obedience and good-will is returned to her in security, honour and prosperity.

The Ideal, which has found no place in the arid text of the Constitution, results from the union of these two words: "Democratic Republic." The people participate in the Government, on condition that that government is really their own. The extension to the greater

number of earthly happiness and moral comfort, such is the constant preoccupation of the State: equal and voluntary discipline demands this large and perpetual benefit. A wise and peaceable regulating of the difficulties inherent to life in common; fraternal assistance, within reach of every family and every individual; riches and well-being, the results of a common effort, equally shared amongst those who contribute to produce it; the attenuation of sorrow and pain, in one word, the constant progress of social justice—such are the engagements entered into by the authors of the Constitution, issued from various origins, when they signed the compact.

On the other hand, the People ratified by successive votes the system of specialised work instituted by the Representative and Parliamentary System, which delegates the power to its Representatives. The political work of the People is handed over to those who claim aptitude for it. This privilege may remain for a long time in the hands of the *bourgeois*, whose leisure, tastes and debating turn of mind qualify them for it. But the moral empire thus attributed to them will not be left in their hands if they do not make good use of it, if they do not exert it heartily and honestly.

The "Government of the Ten Thousand," said Bismarck. It is so. The men who live in the Chambers, in councils, committee rooms, parliamentary and electoral, whose constantly repeated names have become inscribed in men's memories, have obtained that advantage. They reign. Well, let them reign, if only they are diligent, exact, disinterested, willing to do their best, loyally, for the country which trusts them.

Custom makes laws. What matters the wording of the Act if the debt of honour holds?

Conclusion.

The Constitution of 1875 will realise all the merits dreamed of by its anxious founders, if the exchange of services between rulers and ruled is regulated by the sentiments of abnegation, conciliation, and persevering optimism which, on the morrow of great disasters, brought about the peaceable advent of Democracy.

CHAPTER VI

THE DEATH-THROES OF THE ASSEMBLY

I. The summer vacation, August 1875.—The Conservative policy of M. Buffet becomes marked.—Ministerial dissensions.—Instructions from the Comte de Chambord.—M. Rouher's speech.—M. Thiers at Arcachon.—Letter from Gambetta to the Democrats of Lyons.

II. Last Session of the National Assembly.—The Legislative Electoral Law.—Gambetta breaks with the Right Centre.—M. Buffet reconstitutes the majority of the 24th May.—The law of the 30th November, 1875, is passed.—Electoral Districts.

III. Election of Life-Senators.—First Ballot; the Right and the Left neutralise each other.—Compact between the Extreme Right, the Bonapartists and the Left.—The 75 Life-Senators.

IV. Death-throes of the Assembly.—The Committee of Pardons.—Proposal of Amnesty.—Martial law and the *régime* of the Press.—Relative position of the parties.—Last days of the Assembly.—Dissolution.

V. Criticism on the National Assembly.

I

NOW that the Constitution was voted, the Assembly had but to go. This was intimated from every quarter. No "Long Parliament" ever seemed so insupportable as this Constituent Chamber during the last months of its existence. The Dissolutionist campaign, so ardently led from the first, had gradually made its way into public opinion. During the five years that the Assembly had lasted, it had seen and done so many things! It had been the prey of so much outside criticism, so many internal divisions! Breathless, exhausted, it sank under the weight of unpopularity which its own struggles, and even the services it had rendered, increased day by day.

Holidays.

And yet, there were still some urgent laws to complete and some accounts to settle.

In the modern *régime*, everything ends in a public debate. Work in earnest only begins after much dirty linen has been washed in the light of day.

After the discussions and votes which had marked the two first Sessions of 1875, so many obscurities concealed the past, so many complications overshadowed the future, that a general liquidation, before the dispersion of the Assembly, was inevitable.

This took place during the Parliamentary vacation (August–November, 1875). Men knew that they would only meet again to part; the end had come, everything could be said and a "clean breast" made.

The Ministerial Situation.

The Ministry, by its composition and the respective tendencies of its members, represented that state of latent hostility and undefined bitterness, which was that of the Assembly. It existed with difficulty, shaken between the roughness of M. Buffet and the palliatives of M. Dufaure. The Marshal and the Conservative parties held back the Vice-President of the Council, who wished to be allowed to leave, and, on the other hand, the Left accepted everything in order to maintain in the Cabinet the two members who belonged to it. On either side, the worst was feared.

The ill-jointed machinery creaked at every step. M. Bardoux, Under-Secretary of State for Justice and the most conciliatory of men, made, on the 17th August, at the prize distribution of the Henri IV Lycée, a speech in which the recent law on Higher Education was lightly criticised in passing. President Buffet thought this intolerable, and forbade the publication of the speech in the *Journal Officiel*. M. Léon Say wrote: "It is evident that M. Buffet wishes to get rid of Bardoux, and that when he has found a door for that purpose, he will

push us through it in our turn. Consequently, it is clear that we had better choose our own door if we do not wish it to be chosen for us."

M. Buffet accepted the challenge at Dompaire on the 19th September, and confirmed his rupture with the Left Centre. "We have thought it our duty to put an end from the first to a most dangerous equivocation, by showing, both by our words and actions, that the vote of the constitutional laws in no wise implied the renunciation of a clearly Conservative policy, nor even the adoption of a policy which, if it is not yet a Revolutionary policy, might open the way to the latter and serve as a preparation and a transition."

It seemed as if the Vice-President of the Council took pleasure in destroying with his own hands the fragile edifice which he had raised.

M. Léon Say did not choose to leave this provocation unanswered. A week later, he gathered together, in his château of Stors, all the mayors of the neighbourhood and returned the ball to M. Buffet in these words: "No Government in France can be a lasting one which does not gather around it the Liberal party; that is, the moderate men who have always condemned excesses, but who have not turned away from Liberty on account of the crimes committed in its name; the men who represent, in a word, the modern Idea, and who, reduced to silence under two Empires, can give great strength and great prestige to the new Government."

M. Buffet and M. Léon Say.

M. Buffet was angry in his turn. Following his own precedent, he forbade the reproduction in the *Journal Officiel* of a speech which had already appeared in the newspapers. The incident was a lively one. M. Léon Say held firm, and had the advantage of good humour. M. Buffet took everything tragically. . . . He had to give way and to content him-

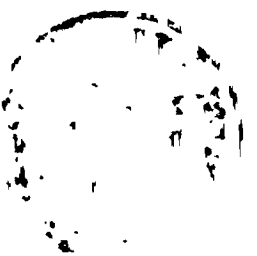
self with an ironical letter from his Minister of Finance: "I send you a speech which I delivered on the 26th at the château of Stors. You have perhaps already read it in the newspapers. . . ."[1] The speech, accompanied by the letter as a preamble, appeared at last in the *Journal Officiel* on the 2nd October.

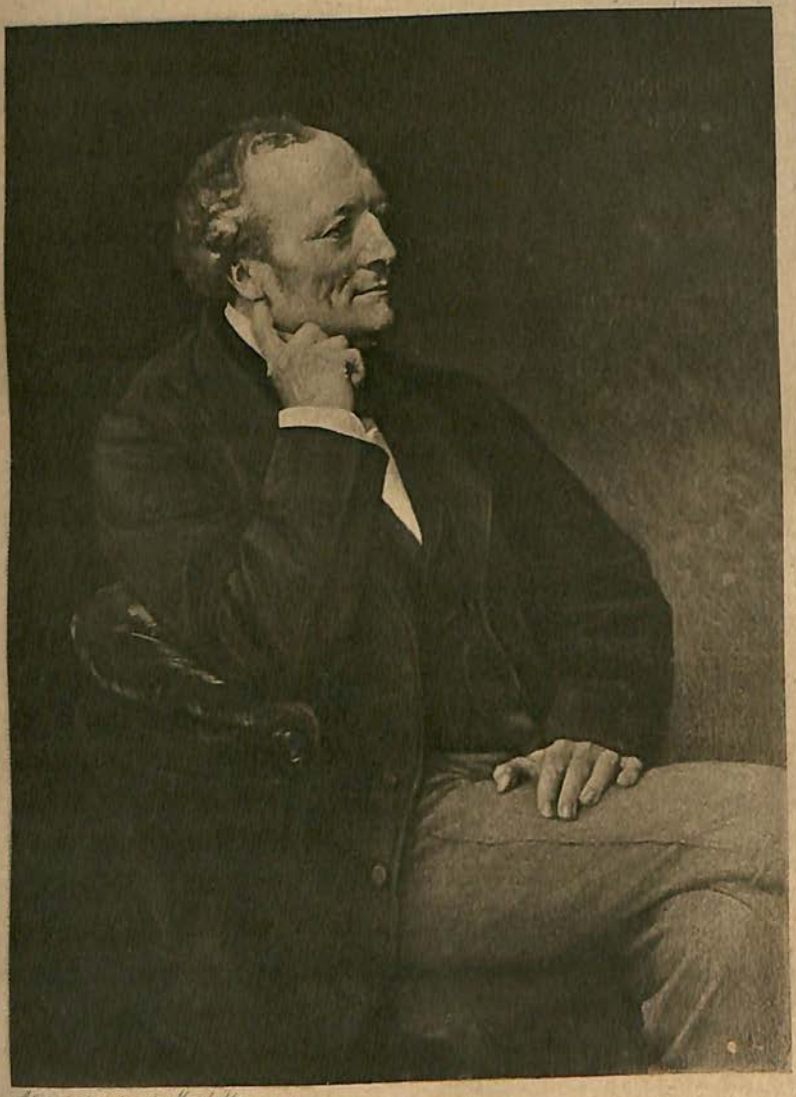
M. de Meaux writes in his *Souvenirs*: "I was absolutely resolved to follow Buffet, and I led him towards a compromise to which M. Léon Say was urged by M. Dufaure. . . . The latter remained in the Cabinet, but became more intimately and openly allied with the Left. His antagonism against the President and the majority of the Council became more and more aggressive. . . ." A fine game was being lost by mere mismanagement. The Left was gaining by this crumbling away of the Conservative party.

Another sign of the times: M. Magne had spoken at Périgueux on the occasion of the opening of the session of the General Council, and he had praised M. Thiers. The Duc de Broglie, in his turn, speaking at Évreux on the 20th September, recognised the claims of M. Thiers, "his talents and his services;" he was good enough to add that "with the new institutions, France will be able to live and to escape the horrors of anarchy and the adventures of an autocracy."

This was indeed the problem which agitated men's consciences. Should the Conservative Right, the Monarchical Right, frankly accept the accomplished fact, "enter" into the new institutions, find in them room for those aspirations and interests which they had so clumsily supported hitherto? A member of the Right Centre, M. Auguste Callet, publicly raised the question in a letter addressed on the 19th October to the leader of the Legitimist party, M. de la Rochette. He placed before

[1] Vicomte de Meaux, p. 267.





After the painting by Monchablon

Louis Buffet.

the Right the promises made and the realised facts; his reasoning was unimpeachable: "Neither you nor I voted for the law of the 25th February," he wrote. "But you and I have, on several occasions, freely proclaimed, by our votes, the sovereignty of the Assembly and its constituent power. Now that it has pronounced, ought we not to bow to its decision? . . . If you say that our assistance is superfluous, I answer, 'How do you know that?' And if the country, through your abstention, must go to ruin, as you say, why refuse to hold out your hand to save it?"

M. de la Rochette found it difficult to answer. He incriminated the Orleanists, then the Revolution; he quoted 1830. He said that, with the Revolutionary spirit, nothing could be founded. But then, why had he supported and proclaimed the Constituent power of the Assembly? M. de la Rochette had not yet uttered his last contradiction.

The Legitimists evidently felt a sort of half-satisfaction in the disappointment inflicted on the Orleanists by the foundation of a Republic, and, at the same time, a sort of discontent, awaiting its hour. The Comte de Chambord desired his friends not to abstain from political and parliamentary work; on the contrary. The *Union* wrote: "General instructions, and not a letter written to a Deputy, have acquainted the friends of M. le Comte de Chambord with his thoughts, particularly on the subject of Senatorial elections." There was something below the surface.

Instructions from the Comte de Chambord.

It was now the turn of the other allies of the 4th May, the Bonapartists. At Évreux, Admiral La Roncière le Noury, a Deputy, in command of the Mediterranean Squadron, caused a letter to be read at a banquet, in which he said that "the formula of her Government prevents France from taking her place in the European concert."

M. Buffet was compelled to take steps, and on the 9th September, Admiral La Roncière le Noury was replaced in his command by Admiral Rose.

At Ajaccio, M. Rouher explained the attitude of the party during the five years that had passed. It was already a fine thing that Bonapartism should be able to say, "we have lived." As a good leader, M. Rouher declared himself satisfied with his work: "We have been the true, the only supporters of Universal Suffrage, the fundamental law of our Democratic nation." "The right of revision leaves every hope to the party. It can set its foot, not without, but within the Constitution itself; there it will find an instrument of salvation." Those were powerful words; the Republican party required much tact and prudence to remain standing on the narrow and fragile platform which was left to it. The hour had not yet come when, in M. Louis Blanc's words (9th October, 1875), "the Republic might become . . . the Republic."

Two men alone had sufficient authority to conduct manœuvres in these obscure times: M. Thiers and M. Gambetta.

M. Thiers at Arcachon.

M. Thiers spoke at Arcachon on the 17th October. In his own vivacious manner, he went straight to the heart of the subject. "The Republic is voted. What is to be done! Only one thing, by all of us, at once: to endeavour frankly and loyally, to make it succeed. Whatever future we may foresee, this is our one duty. . . . The Republic is difficult, do you say. What about the Monarchy? Let us therefore, in view of the coming elections, enter frankly upon the new road: after the next electoral consultation, France will require a governing Government," A simple and precise programme of action followed: "The country must com-

plete its financial system, revise its military laws, renew, in 1876, its commercial treaties, develop its education according to the bases of modern society. . . . France has no time to waste in the eyes of Europe, which is not wasting time either; for there is not one nation which is not working at this time to make itself stronger and better ordered. . . ."

In a passing glance at foreign politics, M. Thiers showed, once again, the astonishing penetration of his ever youthful mind: "The Europe of 1875 is very different from that of 1815 and even of 1830. Forty years ago, it was leagued against reforms, and, now, it is wholly given up to reform. I entreat those who might think themselves in agreement with Europe by resisting the spirit of the century, to understand that, instead of drawing nearer to her, they would estrange her, and perhaps incur *blame* instead of attracting sympathy, awaken apprehension, and perhaps even animadversion." Here was an obvious allusion to the Kulturkampf and a discreet courtesy regarding the Bismarckian policy. M. Thiers had understood the preoccupation of the latter: he disclaimed any connection with the "white policy" in Europe. This was a logical consequence, for, as he said in conclusion, "Fate had spoken" and "the National Assembly, although a Monarchical one, had voted the Republic."

Gambetta's letter to Lyons.

Gambetta dictated the programme of the Republicans in the Government in a letter written on the 25th October to the Democrats of Lyons: "What the victorious majorities chiefly have to fear, is to allow themselves to touch everything at once, at the risk of confounding and compromising everything. . . . The science of politics, in these days, is bound, like all other sciences, to go gradually from the

simple to the complex; but it requires, more than any other science, a spirit of circumspection, of prudence, and of temperance."

He took up M. Thiers' programme and made it even more precise. France must: "First, *restore her credit*; this will be the work of a reorganisation of the system of taxes, which will henceforth be based upon income tax. Secondly, *fortify her material power*, by establishing personal and universal military service. Thirdly, and last, *ensure her intellectual development*, by the organisation of a complete system of national Education, restoring to the State its real attributions and capable of drawing intelligence and morality out of the serried ranks of the people. . . ."

There would be time to talk of revision afterwards; the present need was to live with the actual *régime* as established by mutual sacrifices. "We shall witness, sheltered by the Constitution, a pacific struggle between the Conservative and the Progressive parties, the Tories and Whigs of the Republic." "In this united France, we may be allowed to see the fall of hatred and prejudice between classes; civil peace will reign. The new social strata born of the French Revolution and of Universal Suffrage, reconciled with the *élite* of the old Society, will at last achieve, through the close and daily more prolific union of the *Prolétariat* and the *Bourgeoisie*, the immense evolution begun in 1789." Gambetta thought that a great measure of national reconciliation should shortly become necessary, and he ended his letter by a very clear allusion to an amnesty in favour of the condemned of the Commune.

After this public debate, a general opinion could now be formed; it was now possible to see where clearness of views, generosity and foresight were to be found.

The Reserve called for the first time.

In September 1875, the call to Reservists took place for the first time: the new military organisation was applied in one of its provisions most likely to touch the interests of the citizens. Patriotic sentiment was so strong that this burden was gallantly borne. In spite of the suddenness of the call, which had to some extent the character of a surprise, there were but very few resisters. Relief was distributed, through municipalities, to the most necessitous families, and a circular of the 2nd September informed the communes that they could, if necessary, obtain State aid.

Higher Education.

The law for the organisation of Higher Education, passed in May, was being applied. M. Wallon, Minister of Public Instruction, caused the President of the Republic to issue a number of decrees intended to make State Education able to compete against the free Faculties. A special Chair of Criminal Law was instituted in eight Law Faculties; a Chair of Zoology was founded at Marseilles; in the Faculties of Clermont and Poitiers, the Natural History Chair was duplicated, and also the Chair of Mathematics at Clermont, Grenoble and Caen. A Law Faculty was instituted at Lyons and a Faculty of Medicine at Lille, with the help of the Municipal Councils of these two cities.

On the other hand, free Higher Education was being established. Pope Pius IX, in a letter addressed to Mgr. Dupanloup, congratulated the latter on the success he had obtained in making the Assembly vote the recent law. The faithful were expected to contribute to the expenses of those new Faculties, in which the Church thought to find a powerful means of influence. French Catholicism, exalted by this prospect and by the benevolence of public powers, asserted its position. The

Arras *Semaine religieuse* demanded that "what are stupidly called the principles of 1789 should be banished for ever . . . etc." And the Bishop of Versailles, in a *mandamus* relating to the creation of free Universities, wrote: "They are mistaken who flatter themselves that they can interpret the *Syllabus* in a sense favourable to the system of modern liberties. The Church will not submit to the exigencies of modern politics, and will not become reconciled with the spirit of the times."

What imprudence! What improvidence!

II

Last Session of the National Assembly.

The Assembly met again on the 4th November. The end had really come.

Before separating, it had to decide the fate of that last part of the Constitutional Laws, the voting of which had been delayed from day to day until the last moment: it was a question directly interesting to each member of the Assembly—the electoral law.

The principle, the maintenance of Universal Suffrage, had long been proclaimed. But it had to be inserted in the text and introduced into practice. No further delay was possible; the time had come to make the bed of the future Chamber, and at the same time to constitute the future Senate.

The election became the fixed idea of the dying Assembly. It had to prepare the coming Legislative election by deciding upon the mode of ballot, whether *scrutin de liste* or *scrutin d'arrondissement;* it had to elect the seventy-five Life-Senators. By each of those two measures, it disposed of the future of some of its members, and pronounced a first sentence upon itself.

A Parliamentary Government has its Revolutions,

which are modifications of the system of ballot: nothing is more important, for these changes affect the articulation which transmits force from the country to the Government. If the Social Body suffers, if the machinery goes wrong, the mode of ballot is the first thing to be accused. Minorities complain and majorities become alarmed.

Re-election, as a matter of fact, is the principal sanction of Parliamentary responsibility. Therefore, in critical times, the electoral law is the principal concern of Assemblies.

The two Ballot Systems.

The choice before the French legislators lay between two systems; the *scrutin de liste* and the *scrutin d'arrondissement*. The paradoxical idea, supported by M. Émile de Girardin, of a "national list" is unrealisable, at least for a long time to come; as to the "representation of minorities," as it was supported by Stuart Mill, it would seem to be incompatible with the rigorous and exclusive logic of the French mind; though often suggested, it has always been rejected.

Therefore, the ballot should be per list, or per *arrondissement*.

France is divided, "cut up," as has often been said, into eighty-six *Départements*. Those administrative districts have broken with the ancient tradition of provinces; the Revolution deliberately subordinated local life to the supreme necessity of national unity, and this "cutting up" is a permanent manifestation of administrative and political centralisation.

Such as it is, each Department forms a whole; by the slow work of years, the torn fragments of provinces have joined together again and entered upon a new lease of life. A Department now forms a separate entity, subdivided in its turn into *arrondissements*. By placing one of its own agents at the head of each *arrondissement*, the central power formidably strengthened its hold upon

the country: provincial France is reduced by this means into mere administrative and political "dust."

It is very easy to discern the character of the struggle which takes place during every crisis of the French parliamentary *régime* between the partisans of the ballot per departmental list and those of the *scrutin d'arrondissement.* The former means independence of the power, whilst the latter means servitude. The *scrutin de liste* co-ordinates the *débris* of local life, whilst the *scrutin d'arrondissement* divides them still further. Progressive parties, who follow ideas and aspire to ideals, will adhere to the *scrutin de liste;* Conservative parties and Governments partial to vested interests, to localisation and general stability, will choose the *scrutin d'arrondissement.*

Should the Constitution decide in favour of one mode or the other for reasons of principle, or should the alternative be left to the choice of the nation as a peaceable resource, a safety valve?

The Constituent Assembly of modern France, the National Assembly of 1875, did not feel certain enough of its own opinion on this delicate subject to inscribe it on the Constitutional tables; whilst selecting a solution, it did not stamp it with a character of rigidity. The debate remained open.

The Assembly was, in fact, so very uncertain when the discussion began, that no one could foretell what the result would be.

On the 16th October, before the session was even resumed, M. Buffet had announced to the Permanent Committee that the Government would ask that the electoral law should be placed on the agenda for the day. The Cabinet intended to support the *scrutin d'arrondissement,* against the decision of the new Committee of Thirty, in favour of the *scrutin de liste,* and would, if necessary, make the question one of confidence.

Circumstances were particularly delicate: within the Cabinet itself, MM. Dufaure and Léon Say, of the Left, favoured the *scrutin d'arrondissement*, thus in agreement with M. Buffet, but in disagreement with the groups of the Left; therefore, if the *scrutin d'arrondissement* carried the day, M. Buffet, master of the field, might separate from MM. Dufaure and Léon Say and reconstitute the majority of the 24th May on the eve of the elections; on the contrary, if the *scrutin de liste* were voted, the Lefts, whilst obtaining an important success, rejected at one stroke their two natural leaders. Alone in the Cabinet, M. Bardoux, Under-Secretary of State for Justice, had bound himself to the *scrutin de liste*. He resigned on the 7th November.

On Thursday, 4th November, 1875, on the Government's proposition, the second reading of the electoral law was fixed for the 8th.

The *Bureau* was re-elected. M. d'Audiffret-Pasquier remarked that, though a very full one, this would be a short session. On the 12th November, M. Dufaure introduced a Bill concerning the Press, divided under three headings. It was a *bourgeois* Bill, somewhat restricting former freedom; it took away from the jury and handed over to police-court tribunals a certain number of offences. It offered a certain satisfaction to the Left by the firmness with which Republican institutions were protected, and Bonapartist propaganda opposed. But, by a scarcely concealed artifice, a third heading was added with the object of ending the state of siege wherever it existed, save in the Departments of Seine, Seine et Oise, Rhône, Bouches-du-Rhône, and the city of Algiers. This was intended to induce an Assembly which called itself Liberal to vote for that part of the Bill which related to the *régime* of the Press.

The Press Bill.

Following the same train of thought, the Assembly decided, on the 15th November, not to discuss the Municipal Organisation Bill, but to leave it to its successors; in consequence of this, the "Mayors' Law" was maintained.

M. Buffet asserted his position in the course of the debate. "The elections will be loyal, free and sincere," said he. But, at the same time, he broke with the Lefts more unmistakably than ever, by an attack on the "Revolutionary Committees supported by M. Gambetta," an allusion to the state of affairs in Lyons. The Government had its own "electoral preference," and nothing would prevent it from making it known. "The Government has everywhere the right to defend itself; the country will judge." The starting-point of the electoral period, tacitly open, was therefore a declaration of war to the Republican groups, though represented in the Cabinet. The Left leaders, thus directly attacked, stood champing their bits, yet hesitated to hurry events, times being so difficult and so dark.

A *Times* Leading Article.

The second discussion of the Electoral Bill had begun on the 8th November. The *Times* published, on the 6th November, an article which caused some sensation. "The intention of the Marshal-President, if the Cabinet is beaten on the *scrutin d'arrondissement*, is to choose a Broglie-Fourtou Cabinet, half-Orleanist and half-Bonapartist, and to go to the elections fighting all the Republicans, everywhere, from M. Thiers to M. Naquet."

An indefinite adjournment of the elections was spoken of. Every means was used. M. de Vinols heard it whispered that, if the Assembly did not dissolve, "there would be a war with Germany in the spring."

Meanwhile, the debate on the Electoral Bill began by a flood of vain words. Soon, interest grew; all amendments

were withdrawn, so much was the need for haste making itself felt. The general discussion was cut short, and paragraph 1 of Clause I., proclaiming the practice of Universal Suffrage, was voted by 667 against 3. This was but the ratification of what had already been decided at the time of the first reading of the Municipal law; but who would have expected from the Assembly so much zeal for an institution cursed so forcibly by many of its members? Clauses I. to IV. were carried without discussion.

Clause V. was reserved until the mode of ballot should be discussed.

A little time was spent on Clause VII., concerning the ineligibility of military men. General de Cissey, in the name of discipline, opposed the presence of soldiers in Assemblies. It is a principle of order, in a Democracy, to keep the army, as far as possible, out of all political strife. The Assembly pronounced for ineligibility, and only made exceptions in favour of officers on the General Staff, or of those mentioned in the first section by reason of having held chief command on active service.

Another debate took place on the "imperative mandate." Clause XIII. of the Bill forbade it. M. Naquet asked for the suppression of the clause. He attacked the representative system, "which creates a bastard oligarchy." The true Republican theory was *Direct* Government, and, as it was materially impossible to apply it, there was only one palliative, the *imperative mandate.* The text of the Committee was adopted by 575 votes against 54; in the Assembly of 1875, the principle of Representation did not even need to be defended.

Clause XIV. proposed that the elections should be worked on the list system; the Assembly itself had been elected in that manner. An amendment by M. Lefèvre-Pontalis took up the early wording of the first Committee

of Thirty, organising the *scrutin d'arrondissement*. M. Lefèvre-Pontalis expatiated on his amendment: "The *scrutin de liste* places the elector into the hands of undelegated Committees. The wider the electoral circle grows, the less is the elector acquainted with the elected. As M. Taine puts it, a departmental election is a *jugglery*, and, according to the late Duc de Broglie, it is a *lie* or a dupery." The speaker quoted Lamartine: "Do you know who has invented a trap for twenty free nations? It is a meeting of seven or eight journalists of nomadic opinions, uprooted from their towns and villages and submerged in a capital, their only element. Those journalists, on the eve of an election, trembling lest they be forgotten by the Paris districts, or the departments from whom they had to ask an hazardous election, said to each other: 'Let us take the election from the people; let us hand it to clubs and committees; let us invent the *scrutin de liste*. The winner of the election will not be the most worthy, but the most active'—and it was so."

The *scrutin de liste* is a ballot of names and formulæ, not of titles and men; it is a ballot of passions. It shouts an "electoral shout," addressed to sentiment, not to reason. On the other hand, "multiple elections" born of the *scrutin de liste*, present a plebiscitary danger (this was aimed at MM. Thiers and Gambetta). "Might they not submit the Constitution to a hard trial by preparing electoral manifestations destined to weaken, if not to hold in check, the Presidential power?" The *scrutin d'arrondissement* alone is the logical development of the Constitution, which it strengthens and consolidates. It alone truly respects the rights and interests of the electors.

M. Luro, of the Right Centre, already noticeable by his resolute attitude in the debate on the constitutional law, supported the *scrutin de liste*. He addressed a

"solemn appeal" to those who had had the courage to vote for the Constitution, to remain united before the country. The two camps were clearly defined. The interest of that intervention lies in that it indicated, between M. Lefèvre-Pontalis and M. Luro, the spot where the rent would take place.

Thursday the 11th saw the battle which defined the electoral position. M. Ricard, an eminent deputy of the Left, Reporter of the Bill, pointed to the evolution of the Right, born of the *scrutin de liste*, whose leaders (MM. de Broglie and Chesnelong), partisans at first of that mode of ballot, were now turning round. The *scrutin d'arrondissement* was an arbitrary system, like the division into *arrondissements* itself: it is a system of corruption, debasing French policy to a level of electoral *cuisine*.

M. Dufaure's Speech.

M. Dufaure, this time, was against the Left. In the old Committee of Thirty, M. Dufaure, already favourable to the *scrutin d'arrondissement*, was in the minority. The leaders of the Right still hoped to be able to draw up lists in which the three Conservative parties would be represented, and they demanded the *scrutin de liste*. M. Dufaure, on the contrary, remained faithful to his opinion, and defended in the new Committee the principle which he had supported in the first.

For him, the *scrutin d'arrondissement* was an independent and responsible system. The *scrutin de liste* oppresses minorities, the other system gives them a legitimate place. The *scrutin d'arrondissement* favours shades of opinion, gives time and means for reflection; whilst the *scrutin de liste* acts after the fashion of a plebiscite, brutally and all at once; with such a system, the country might awake to find itself faced by unexpected and irreparable results. . . .

The conclusion of this clever and convincing speech

deserves to be quoted: "Now, if we are asked what will be the results, at the coming election, of the *scrutin de liste* or of the *scrutin d'arrondissement*, I am obliged to say that, between this day and the day when that great result takes place, there is a veil, an impenetrable veil; and if I say so for myself, you, partisans of the *scrutin de liste*, should be no less reserved, no less modest than we are. I say there is an impenetrable veil, which does not allow us to guess at the future. All that we can do is to bring here, freely and firmly, an opinion which, whatever you may say, is, in my case, due to long reflection and, as I think, in conformity with the interest of the country. . . ."

Gambetta intervenes.

"There is no veil between ourselves and the country," cried M. Gambetta, rushing somewhat brusquely into the debate. "You all know that there is no veil. The veil has been woven and placed before the eyes of the Honourable Keeper of the Seals by an administration which is hostile to existing institutions. . . . And when we have just seen the revelation of this political blindness, we are asked to embark upon the unknown. . . . Truly, the Honourable Keeper of the Seals never defended a worse cause with more visible distrust."

There was a combative accent in his tone. M. Dufaure had spoken of the excellence of the *scrutin de liste* in great circumstances: "I turn the argument against you. What! that redeeming system, that system which is so useful, will now become, in peaceful times, useless, impotent and sterile? It will be good for nothing because a Constitution shall have been founded, because the nation will at last rest peacefully under the ægis of the laws! The *scrutin de liste* alone safeguards the dignity of the elector and the elected. When a deputy is elected on a Departmental list, when he holds his mandate from 150,000, 200,000, 300,000 electors, he is

no longer held in leash, he is not a sort of errand-boy for his electors. . . . When you have made small districts of 12,000, 15,000 or 20,000 electors, of whom one-third will abstain from voting, and in which three or four candidates will dispose of the rest of the voters, when you have done that, I ask you, will the elected truly hold a mandate from the people? The truth is," cried the orator, now speaking to the gallery, "the truth is that you do not believe in Universal Suffrage. . . ." Gambetta, carried away by his subject and by his own warmth, broke entirely away from the Right Centre, in whom he had found unexpected allies when the Constitution was voted. The Legitimist and Orleanist parties now being disabled, he could not forego the satisfaction of tolling the knell of the Orleanist party; the Republican party now believed itself strong enough to stand alone before the country.

"What is the reason for the favour accorded to the *scrutin d'arrondissement?* There is in this Assembly and outside, one party, one alone, which has, or which seems to think it has a preponderating interest in the *scrutin d'arrondissement;* it is not the Legitimist party, not the Bonapartist party, not the Republican party, it is . . . the other party. It is to be recognised by this characteristic: Constitutional on the 29th February, it is no longer so on the 26th. And, after having been Constitutional on the 25th February, it would be Dynastic under a Republican *régime.* They say to each other: The Constitution which we owe to the old Republican party, to reasonable Republicans, that constitution is such a conservative one that . . . who knows? We have already changed a nurseling Republic, we might also change a Constitution. . . . Well, that party is mistaken. That army corps, led by grave and subtle wiseacres, will be crushed under the *scrutin d'arrondissement*

as under the *scrutin de liste*, because it distrusts Universal Suffrage, and is distrusted by it in its turn. . . . In certain rotten boroughs, a few may succeed in being elected, but the flood will pass over the party, and they will never rise again."

After such an explanation, the ground was cleared for future battles. But it is incontestable that this speech threw back towards the Right many who were hesitating and timorous, and that, in any case, it secured the vote of the *scrutin d'arrondissement*, since its haughty tone irritated those whose assistance was necessary.

The *scrutin d'arrondissement* is adopted by the Assembly.

Gambetta and his friends demanded a secret ballot. By 357 votes against 326, the Assembly adopted the Lefèvre-Pontalis amendment, that is to say, established the *scrutin d'arrondissement*. The Liberal Right Centre had seceded from the Constitutional party after Gambetta's intervention.

The Buffet Cabinet was strengthened, having now a considerable majority, apart from the Constitutional Lefts.

Had Gambetta and the leaders of the Left discounted a possible success? Were they mistaken as to the probable result of the vote? Or did they mean to proclaim the principle and assert their rupture with the leaders of the Right Centre, in order to complete the dislocation of the old Liberal party?

However it may have been, the majority of the 25th February was not increasing; very much the contrary: it was the majority of the 24th May which was becoming reconstituted and grouping around M. Buffet and, with him, two Ministers whose Republicanism was above suspicion, MM. Dufaure and Léon Say.

It was a triumph of equivocation. The country would be faced in scattered order. Was the Left with the Government? Were the Government candidates to

be considered as Republicans? More, were there any Government candidates? How could the electors see clearly in all this?

Here M. Gambetta, in a last effort, gave a new proof of his suppleness, whilst the sitting of the 11th November had seen an example of his sometimes imprudent fire. The statesman retreated without false shame and discovered depths of foresight in the endeavour to secure a safe future for his country.

The third discussion on the Electoral Law opened on the 22nd November. The first clauses were read and carried without difficulty, a few trifling changes being made in the wording. But, on the 26th November, the question of ballot was reached, with Clause XIV. Gambetta ascended the tribune. He apologised for speaking again; but he said that the importance of the subject entitled him to make use of the right accorded by the regulations.

He took the situation back to its origin, that is to the vote of the 26th February. The ruling idea at that time, said he, was an idea of compromise and arrangement. Some abandoned the name of Monarchy, others gave up their traditional doctrines on the Presidency of the Republic, on the Second Chamber, and on the right of Revision.

Well, was this compact a sincere one, yes or no? If it was a sincere one, why should it now be broken? That was the question, a question which the electors would have to solve; but they might solve it in different ways, according to the terms in which it was put to them.

For the speaker himself, the compact was a promise "of patriotism and sincerity;" it was also a compact of stability: the country was to be shown that, when the Republic was founded, it was not intended for a vain word, a nominal institution, but a gathering together of

all interests, Conservative interests as well as interests of progress and reform, under the ægis of one charter and one law.

If that compact was to hold before the country, one instrument was necessary and indispensable, the *scrutin de liste;* the *scrutin de liste* is essentially a system of conciliation, it allows combinations satisfactory to persons and to interests, to shades of opinion rallied around the Constitutional formula; it would secure the triumph of a Libéral, Pacifying and Republican policy.

The Assembly seemed less rebellious. Each deputy was lost in thought. But a voice from the Right called out, "It is too late!"

Too late! "It is too late." The most fatal word that can be uttered in politics; it is the cry of obstinacy, of blind prejudice, the cry of wounded pride. "It is too late," the epitaph about to be inscribed by the Right on its own tomb.

Gambetta made a supreme effort: "Gentlemen, you smile when I speak of moderation . . . unless death should strike us prematurely" (how pathetic is this phrase, coming from that man at that moment!), "I shall give you, I feel confident of it, proofs of moderation decisive enough to leave the last word to me."

The conclusion defined Gambetta's thoughts, on the eve of Dissolution, when the Left already held the election. "It is clear enough that the various parties who, for the last five years, have, with more or less tenacity and success, fought against the foundation of the Republic, are now obliged to acknowledge their disappointment and impotence. Well! do you not think that before we die, we might make a will worthy of politicians who, leaving behind them the divisions and rancours of the country, would present themselves before the country, the fundamental law in hand, and say, 'We have made a

charter, we have considered it, and we hand it to you as a hostage of internal security and external prestige.'" And, with a brilliant flash of light illuminating the depths of his patriotic soul, he added: "In a country like France, politics cannot be the same at all times. When a country enjoys material strength, when the circle of its frontiers is intact, it may be well to raise questions of political metaphysics; but, in a country which has not all its frontiers, it is sacrilegious, criminal. And, since you seek for the reason of the work of the 25th February, and of this policy of concord and pacification" (such as was his own noble doing at that very moment), "I give it to you: *Look at the break in the Vosges!*"

M. Buffet's Answer.

How did M. Buffet answer to this appeal? Did he accept the hand held out to him? Did he consent to hear that thrilling voice, still sounding in the silence, calling for a national gathering around the Republican Constitution? Would he enter by a declaration, however reserved, by an attitude, a gesture, into the thoughts of the orator, of the young leader whose tone was so loyal and whose authority was so great in the country? Did the Vice-President of the Council feel the full weight of his responsibility, as his long, bent figure and rugged face appeared at the tribune?

His first words were a reproach. Why did not M. Gambetta use this "new language" on the 11th November? . . . The speech continued in a dry, cutting, aggressive tone, from which all soul seemed absent. "The *scrutin de liste* upon which people insist is a lot which is drawn all at once. It has to be taken as a whole, and, in order to have the good parts of it, the bad ones must be had also. . . . A lottery would be better. . . . The *scrutin de liste* has been suggested by the jugglers of Universal Suffrage," etc. Was that the language of a statesman at a decisive moment?

Lists of conciliation, lists of union?—for that was all that lay at the bottom of M. Gambetta's speech. "The country would assuredly be surprised that political candidates who, on fundamental questions, have opinions not only diverse but absolutely contrary, should be enumerated on the same list. . . . There is no possible compact between the men who are here and Revolutionaries." Every word seemed more bitter in his mouth; at last came the irreparable words of rupture, all the more direct that they took up the advances made by Gambetta, and rejected them. The latter had appealed to "union between constitutional elements." M. Buffet, in his turn, said: "I have appealed and always shall appeal to the union of *conservative* forces to defend a frankly conservative policy; and *every one understands perfectly the meaning of the word.*" It meant the Rights, the Rights alone! The fate was cast. The two successive majorities, that of the 24th May and that of the 25th February, would go to battle one against the other, the latter opposed by the Cabinet, which at the beginning had depended upon it.

The Assembly collected its thoughts for a moment, thinking over the problem. Then a vote was taken. By 388 votes against 302, the Jozon amendment, proposing a *scrutin de liste* with a maximum of five names, supported by Gambetta, was defeated.

The Law of the 30th November, 1875, is voted.

The remainder of the Bill was discussed amidst general impatience and perturbation. On the 29th and 30th, some details in the clauses were settled; already the attention of the Deputies was elsewhere. At last, on the 30th November, by 506 votes against 85, the law was carried which sanctioned the election of the Chamber of Deputies by Universal Suffrage, with the *scrutin d'arrondissement.*

After such a debate, the law, which might have been a

harmonious law, was a discordant one. What a gain it would have been for the country if orators less eager or less obstinate had, from the beginning, smoothed down obstacles, softened bitterness, and encouraged compromise, thus gathering all Frenchmen on a common platform! Where were M. Thiers, M. Grévy, grave and judicial umpires? They sulked and reserved their strength, either from rancour of the past or in prevision of the future.

During the last days of the session (18th–24th December), the Assembly voted, not without a lively discussion, the law which determined the electoral districts.

The principle adopted, in conformity with the propositions of the Committee, was the following: Every *arrondissement* of less than 100,000 inhabitants being entitled to a Deputy, the difficulty bore upon those *arrondissements* which had more than 100,000 inhabitants. The Committee stated in its report that it had "endeavoured to respect natural affinities, and to maintain the unity of towns." The Right, which desired to take up the tabulation proposed by the earlier Committee of Thirty, found no following. For Paris and Lyons, it was decided that each of the municipal *arrondissements* should be entitled to one Deputy.

Party Spirit.

Vanity is the national failing. Hence a constant excitement in the political world, with its lively hatreds and unforgiven insults. The kindly and gentle French nation quite enjoys a little mutual detestation. Extreme parties make use and abuse of this disposition, and reign through discord. How fatal is this fault when it inspires men who are in authority, when irreparable words fall from the lips of those who speak in the name of all! In 1875, the birth of the Republic did not escape that fatal influence. No advantage was taken of the unique moment when a programme of Republican

Government might have been presented to the country to bind hearts together. The "list" would have permitted many combinations and transactions which were set aside by the uninominal vote.

M. Léon Say wrote, at that time, passing judgment on the Cabinet to which he belonged: "Anarchy will be the chief characteristic of the electoral movement." . . . His irony thus described the final preoccupations of the Assembly: "The Assembly can only think of one thing, now, Dissolution, and I do not know how all that remains to be voted will get passed. There are numberless intrigues for a place on the Senate list; the Presidents and Secretaries have received, it is said, more than 300 applications for the 75 appointments. One thing adds to the anxiety, which is that, as long as the 75 are not appointed, nobody knows whom he will have for a competitor, either for the Deputyship, in his own district, or in the departmental list for the Senate."

Whilst M. Buffet's Government was thus painfully manœuvring at home, it was gravely occupied abroad. Matters in the East were not improving. An insurrection in Herzegovina, some abnormal agitation in the Balkans, made the maintenance of peace more uncertain every day.

Egyptian Affairs. The Suez Canal.

At the same time, France was pursuing in Egypt some delicate negotiations which put a check on a situation acquired by long and persevering efforts in that country. Here, again, she was being ransomed for her defeat in 1871.

England, by a bold intervention, hurried the course of events, and won a first success which singularly affected the interests and prestige of France. The future was at stake of an essentially French work, the Suez Canal. The Khedive Ismail was more deeply than ever involved in

debt; he did not know which way to turn. In the early days of November 1875, a French banker, M. Édouard Dervieu, the head of a banking-house at Alexandria, obtained from him an option to purchase for a sum of 92,000,000 fr. the title-deeds of the company which he owned. In Paris, M. Édouard Dervieu, master of the option until the 16th November, entered into relations with some important establishments, notably with the Société Générale, the Crédit Lyonnais, and the Crédit Foncier, administered at that time by M. Frémy and the Baron de Soubeyran; the Baron offered some opposition, the first M. Dervieu had met with. A group attempted formation, but without success.

The time for the option having now passed, the intention to purchase was abandoned in favour of a plan for an advance on the deeds. M. Édouard Dervieu asked for the assistance of M. de Lesseps. M. de Lesseps laid the matter before the Duc Decazes, and eagerly begged the Minister to prevail upon his colleague, M. Léon Say, to cause the withdrawal of the opposition of the Crédit Foncier. M. Decazes "resisted the persuasive and really seductive addresses of M. de Lesseps." M. Léon Say, prejudiced against the plan, did not show himself more favourable.

In the meanwhile, the London Cabinet was warned. In a conversation which took place between Mr. Oppenheim, a banker who had relations with the French group, and Mr. Frederick Greenwood, Editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the opportunity for British intervention was mentioned. Mr. Greenwood hastened to inform Lord Derby, and the latter immediately held counsel with the Premier, Mr. Disraeli, Lord Salisbury, then Indian Secretary, and Sir Stafford Northcote, Chancellor of the Exchequer. The other Ministers were not admitted to that important discussion.

M. Gavard, *chargé d'affaires* in London, received from the Duc Decazes orders to ascertain whether "England would tolerate a purchase by a French company," a dangerous step of which the inevitable effect was to attract the attention of the Foreign Office (19th November).

Indeed, matters did not drag. Whilst, in Paris, "cold water" was thrown upon French banks, the British Government decided, without a moment's delay, to lay hands upon the prize. That possibility had already, as will be remembered, formed the subject of a discussion in the House of Lords.

Already on the 18th November, Major-General Staunton, British Consul-General in Egypt, had received from Lord Derby a telegram, instructing him to inform the Khedive that the English Government was ready to buy the title-deeds; and the French Government, on the other hand, was advised that England was opposed to the purchase of the shares by French capitalists. Paris did not attempt to continue the conversation in any way. It does not seem that, failing a counter-opposition to the English project, any sort of compromise was put forward.

The English Prime Minister was an intimate friend of Mr. Nathan de Rothschild. The London firm of Rothschild furnished the necessary advance, and, on the 25th November, Major-General Staunton signed with Sadik Pasha, Finance Minister of the Khedive, the convention by which the latter handed to the British Government the 176,602 shares which he held in the Canal against a sum a little under 100,000,000 francs.

Those shares are now worth 800,000,000, and bring in about 16 or 17 % on the purchase price. The possession of them has secured for England a preponderating part in the affairs of the company, and has allowed her to

develop in an equally unexpected and profitable manner her situation in Egypt and in the Mediterranean.

The news of this bold stroke was received with enthusiasm in London, with pain and surprise in Paris. Nobody knew exactly what had taken place, but there was a general feeling that France had undergone, without a stroke, another grave defeat.

During that uncomfortable year of 1875, was France in a situation to oppose the declared intentions of England? Could she have resisted the sort of injunction intimated by Lord Derby to M. Gavard: "The Company and the French shareholders already possess 110 millions out of the 220 represented by the capital: it is enough." At least she might have tried to make better use of the propositions made to her, of which her financiers and statesmen had been the first to hear.

However this may have been, public opinion made of French abstention a grave reproach against the Foreign Minister, who, indeed, was not alone responsible. The *République Française* wrote on the 29th November: "The Minister has, in this circumstance, given proofs of a blindness unequalled save in the worst days of Imperial diplomacy." On the 1st December, the same paper remarked: "M. le Duc Decazes has not yet handed in his resignation." M. John Lemoinne, in the *Journal des Débats*, exclaimed, "O French nation, who ever draweth chestnuts from the fire!" It was said that M. Thiers was doing all that was possible to undo the harm by urging Prince Orloff to obtain an intervention on the part of Russia. The Russian and German Governments made no opposition. A "world policy" had not yet become an habitual preoccupation of European diplomacy.

Gradually, the matter reached the state of an accomplished fact, and this incident, so humiliating to French

policy, did not even have an immediate echo in the Parliament.[1]

III

The history of the National Assembly is made up of the struggle of two parties within the bosom of French Royalism: Legitimists and Orleanists; a tradition of hatred and revenge weighed upon the factitious union of those fraternal enemies; 1830 hung over 1875. A last action, saturated with old venoms, was now to complete the liquidation, the liquefaction of the Monarchical party.

The supreme thought of the leaders of the Right had been to secure a morrow for their ideas and aspirations by the survival—through institutions accepted failing other alternatives—of the spirit of the Assembly. Marshal MacMahon was the sentinel placed at the head of the Executive authority; and, in the Legislative authority, 75 Life-Senators, appointed by the Assembly, were to guarantee for a long time that majority "of conservation," intended to become at the first favourable circumstance a majority of "revision."

The Life-Senators.

The choice of those 75 Life-Senators was therefore to be the crown of the edifice. The leaders of the Right felt themselves called to fulfil this work and to watch over the sacred fire of Monarchism.

Yet, certain calculations mingle with the noblest intentions. Amongst the Deputies, few deliberately considered themselves excluded; those who thought themselves "called" were many, whilst the list of the "chosen" was

[1] The history of this incident has been given with a luminous precision in an article by M. Charles Lesage, published in the *Revue de Paris* of the 15th November, 1905. M. Lesage had received the confidences of Mr. Ed. Dervieu. See also in the *Times* of the 26th November, 1905, *The Story of the Khedive's Shares*, by Lucien Wolf.—The present writer has had private, unpublished documents at his disposal.

to be a short one: 75 out of 650, barely 1 out of 10. The operation was a difficult one, given the natural indiscipline of man when his vanity and interests are at stake.

On Saturday, the 27th November, M. Bardoux interrupted the discussion on the *scrutin de liste* to move the following order of proceedings: That the National Assembly should elect the 75 Life-Senators at the sitting of the 1st December, and adjourn on the 15th December; the election of the Municipal Councils (who had to appoint the delegates entrusted with the election of the other Senators) to take place in the Departments on the 5th January, 1876; Senatorial elections on the 23rd January, and Legislative elections on the 28th February.

M. de Kerdrel, who was presiding, exclaimed that the Assembly was "taken unawares." . . . Nobody could think of anything else! A few days later, on the 30th November, M. de Clercq made a similar proposition, placing the dates a fortnight later, the Senate and the new Chamber to meet on the 4th March, 1876. Urgency was declared for both propositions.

They were referred to a special Committee for consideration and report. On the 4th December M. Ancel, chairman of this committee, asked that the election of the 75 Life-members should take place on Thursday, the 9th December, and following days, and that course was adopted.

It was unanimously agreed that the 75 Life-Senators should be exclusively taken from the benches of the Assembly. The joust was now opened; general excitement reigned. The two camps, Right and Left, were equal in strength, but many individual evolutions and defections were possible; the time had come for the satisfaction of hidden jealousies and rancour.

The Right Centre was the first to enter the arena; it

was thought by itself and others to be master of the situation. A certain number of delegates were appointed to act in its name. An understanding with the Rights offered no apparent difficulty: to communicate with the Left Centre, the Right Centre delegates approached the members of the Lavergne group. M. de Lavergne was ill; but he remained in touch with the Left groups and negotiated from his bed: even at the approach of Death will men persist in preparing the future.

Could the Centres unite?

The Left Centre knew that, when isolated from the other Lefts, it lost all its strength and lay at the mercy of the Rights. To the advances of the Right Centre, it answered that the idea of an understanding might be entertained on the condition that the three sections of the Left should be represented on the list, and that, on the other hand, all should be excluded who had not voted for the institutions or formally accepted them; the Left Centre intended that the vote should present a clearly constitutional character. Its delegates added: "We are speaking, not only in the name of the Moderate Left, but also in that of the Extreme Left. We will negotiate nothing against or without it." Only that uncompromising group was excepted of which M. Naquet was the most notorious member.

The Rights were embarrassed by this ultimatum. They had already set aside the idea of a mathematically proportionate representation of each group, which would perhaps have been the most reasonable solution.

The delegates of the Right Centre insisted upon the admission of the entire Right, including the Extreme Right, and the exclusion of the Extreme Left. It meant a rupture.

The Right drew up a list of sixty-two names, comprising eleven members chosen amongst the least headstrong of the Extreme Right; all the rest belonged to the

Moderate Rights and to the Lavergne group. The list could be completed, if desired, by thirteen candidates of the Left Centre. Thus would an ideal Senate be obtained, the Senate for which the Constitution had been created.

The Bonapartist group had declared that it claimed nothing, and took no interest in the election. However, as an act of courtesy, two names had been inscribed on the list with a view to pleasing the party, the names of MM. Vente and Hamille. But the leaders of the group had made no promises of any kind. This silence alarmed the most sagacious members of the Right. It was well known that neither the Right nor the Left could do without them, and that their weight on either side of the scale would be decisive. It was also easy to guess that the Bonapartists did not, any more than the Legitimists, desire to consolidate *in perpetuum* Orleanist influence and chances through the new institutions.

The Duc de Broglie said, on the very day of the ballot: "The Bonapartists have laid a plot; their looks are ominous." The deep tactics which had ended in the failure of the "fusion" whilst organising it, and which had counted upon the failure of the Republic whilst voting for it, might now meet with a Waterloo.

On the 6th December, M. Raoul Duval, an Independent Bonapartist, a man of a whimsical and combative disposition, said, laughing, to the Comte d'Osmoy, a member of the Left, that it was very good of the Assembly to raise such men as Broglie, Decazes, Bocher, and Lambert de Sainte-Croix, to political inamovability when they had already drawn from the substance of the Assembly all that could profit them or their cause. As for him, he knew, amongst the Legitimists, men who shared his way of thinking, notably M. de la Rochette, leader of the "*Chevau-légers*," and, if the Left only would, it would be possible, through an alliance between all the

groups opposed to the Moderate Rights, to overthrow the great leaders of the Right Centre, who were so sure of themselves. The Comte d'Osmoy related these words to M. Testelin, the intimate friend of Gambetta. Interviews took place. M. Raoul Duval, with the approbation of M. Rouher, saw M. de la Rochette. But it seems as if things went no further until the first ballot, on the 9th December.

On the 9th December, the Assembly met at one o'clock, as arranged. M. Raoul Duval proposed a postponement of the vote; he protested against the conditions under which the ballot was about to open: "Do you wish, after dumbly voting for the Constitution, that all citizens should hear to-morrow, that seventy-five persons have been invested, without further explanations, with the right of legislating for ever, the right of modifying the form of the Government without having had to render accounts to any one, within this Assembly or outside it, concerning their sympathies, intentions and future conduct?"

M. Raoul Duval and M. de la Rochette.

There was truly something exorbitant in this. But the resolution had been passed; the Raoul Duval motion was set aside. No matter; what he wished was to explain the conduct of himself and of his friends by noting what he considered to be an abuse of the Representative power.

Now for the vote:—After a long count, the result was proclaimed "amidst general astonishment," writes M. Ranc. The number of voters was 688, 344 forming an absolute majority. The Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier and M. Martel were alone elected, with 551 and 344 votes. M. d'Audiffret-Pasquier, who on the day before had put his name down for the Left Centre, stood on both lists. The vote on M. Martel's name indicated the clean section of the Assembly into two equal parts.

The remaining names inscribed on the two lists mingled with unimportant differences. M. Buffet, who headed the Right list, came thirteenth, with 336 votes; the Duc de Broglie had 318, the Duc Decazes and M. de Meaux 316 each, M. Wallon 314, M. Jules Favre 306.

Now, the united Rights thought they could build upon 360; there must therefore have been some deserters. This disarray of the Right, a failure due on the whole to its own divisions, ripened the plan which had merely germinated in the first conversations between M. Raoul Duval, M. Testelin, and M. de la Rochette. Fresh wounds resulted from the drawing up of the lists and from certain exclusions. Now that combinations and bargains were the order of the day, why not go to the end. The Bonapartist votes were the indispensable help which would guarantee victory. M. Raoul Duval continued to offer his services as an intermediary. On the whole, party votes are always "against" somebody.

The importance of the object, the ardour of the strife, complex reasons, did the rest. On the evening of the 9th December, a meeting took place at the house of M. Jules Simon, in the Place de la Madeleine. M. Raoul Duval had brought M. de la Rochette, chairman, and the Marquis de Gouvello, a member, of the Extreme Right group.

M. de la Rochette was the representative of the Comte de Chambord, "a good, disinterested, exceptionally loyal man," writes M. de Dampierre. He was a tall Breton, bald and sad-faced, with short, grey whiskers; an assiduous, quiet listener, without guile, perhaps a little slow of understanding, "with the cold and courteous irony of an exalted old man"; a dreamer, like all Bretons. This man was the author of the new compact.

He signed it on the same evening, without hesitation: anything to keep the Orleanists out of the Senate.

Seventeen Legitimists were inscribed on the list of the Lefts, and a mutual engagement entered into to vote for the common list. M. Raoul Duval promised in the name of the Bonapartists, who, moreover, did not present any candidates. The names of the members of the Extreme Right were put down without consulting them.

In spite of the secrecy of the proceedings, a rumour began to spread. M. de Franclieu said to M. de Vinols: "Would you like to be a Senator?" And M. Tolain, merrily: "We are going to make you a Senator." Others, meeting him at the station, greeted him with an air of reproach: "Away with you, Senator!" M. de Vinols was completely mystified; his name was on the list, but he did not know it.

The second ballot was to take place on Friday, the 10th. Members arriving at Versailles saw the list, drawn up at M. Jules Simon's during the night, posted on the wall of the refreshment-room. It provoked a shout of fury from the Right Centre and Moderate Right. "There is but one thing to be done," said the Duc de Broglie, "and that is to hiss them."

The ballot was open. One of the members of the Extreme Right, whose name figured on the list—the Comte de Boisboissel—walked towards the tribune and began to speak. The President interrupted him: "You cannot speak." Yet, standing on one of the steps, he said very loud: "Gentlemen, let me warn you that I decline any sort of candidature." A violent tumult followed this declaration, the President maintaining the regulation by which no one is allowed to speak during the ballot, and the Right protesting that: "There is no regulation when it is a question of honour." The same scene took place when it was the turn of the Baron de Vinols, of the Marquis de la Rochejacquelein, then of M. Bourgeois.

When M. de la Rochette came up it was to face a regular storm; fists were being held out towards him. "Speak, speak!" his colleagues cried. But he, turning towards the Duc de Broglie: "Do as you like, gentlemen, you will not frighten me." And he voted amongst acclamations from the Left and groans from the Right. M. Paulin Gillon protested; then the Marquis de Plœuc, not without some hesitation, said in a low voice that he had acquiesced tacitly but had promised nothing. Before speaking, he had asked the President of the Council what he thought of his conduct, and M. Buffet had answered: "What you yourself think of it." On the next day he retired, and gave his resignation as a Deputy. M. de Gouvello had secretly deleted his name from the list.

M. de la Rochette and the Marquis de Franclieu proudly bore the responsibility for their decision; nothing would make them give way.

At 9.25, the result of the ballot was proclaimed; nineteen Senators were elected, one only, General Changarnier, from the Right. All the others belonged to the Left and Left Centre; not one to the Extreme Right. When the President read the name of M. de la Rochette, cheers were repeated, and M. Henri Fournier cried to the Left: "He only lacked applause from you!"

On the next day (11th December), ten Senators were elected, including MM. de la Rochette and de Franclieu. Forty-three places remained to be filled. On Monday, the 13th, the ballot yielded ten more names. On Tuesday, the 14th, only one Senator, M. Fourcand, was elected.

The compact did not hold good. The two parties distrusted one another. The general disorder was painful, almost scandalous for the Assembly. The man in the street laughed or passed severe judgments; it was time to conclude.

M. Raoul Duval drew Gambetta aside. Mutual distrust was explained away, and it was agreed that, if the Extreme Right joined the Lefts to elect a member of the Extreme Left, seven other members of the Extreme Right would be elected.

The plotters organised a system of supervision at the very foot of the tribune, which provoked a protest on the part of the President.

What a sight! and what an ending for the Assembly.

Voting continued, in spite of M. Paris, who demanded that the results obtained be annulled. A lively incident took place between M. Buffet and M. Gambetta, who, frequently interrupted by the Vice-President of the Council, called him "Permanent Minister of Interruption." The President imposed no penalty, in spite of indignant objurgations from the Right.

Eighteen more Senators, from the Extreme Right and from the Left, were elected; it was, roughly, the list of the compact. Similar results were obtained on the 16th, ten Senators were elected. Five more remained to be chosen.

Amongst the coalesced parties, the most moderate men were satisfied and willing, now, to make-room for certain members of the excluded Rights. MM. Gambetta and Lepère opposed this. Finally, the groups resumed their liberty of action, and on the Friday (17th), General de Cissey was elected, under the patronage of M. Thiers; on the Saturday, M. Wallon and Mgr. Dupanloup. On Monday, the 20th, no candidate obtained an absolute majority, but on the Tuesday, Admiral de Montaignac and the Marquis de Malleville came in with 323 and 310 votes.

The 75 Senators were divided as follows, according to party groups: 27 members of the Left Centre, 25 Left, 8 of the Constitutional Extreme Left, 7 of the Lavergne

group, 9 of the Extreme Right, 1 Independent (M. Hervé de Saisy), and 3 of the Right Centre.

The Right Centre was completely defeated. Here was the end of many complicated and far-fetched combinations. . . .!

The Government did not consider itself beaten, for its principal members had withdrawn their candidature after the first count. The Duc Decazes, former Vice-Chairman of the Right Centre, had had but 117 votes. M. Léon Say openly voted for the list of the Lefts.

Reprisals.

After the result was known, hostilities continued. The whole of the Right used but one word: treason, to qualify the conduct of M. de la Rochette and the dissenting "*Chevau-légers.*" Violent scenes took place. Already on the 12th December, the Extreme Right met in order to "wash off" the *opprobrium* with which this desertion covered the Legitimist party. M. de la Rochette had to hand in his resignation as chairman, which was unanimously accepted. M. de la Bouillerie, vice-chairman, who timidly took the part of M. de la Rochette, also resigned.

The *Union*, the Comte de Chambord's organ, kept silence. However, it published on the 16th, a protest repudiating "all idea of an alliance with those groups of the Assembly in which are to be found the most decided adversaries of the Legitimate Monarchy, avowed enemies of the Church and of Christian Social Order.

M. de la Rochette stood his ground. He explained his motives in a letter, also addressed to the *Union*: "What surprises me is to see some colleagues who entered into a political alliance with the Lefts in order to found the Republic, now become indignant because some friends and myself have come to an understanding with them in order to get a few Legitimists into the Senate. . . . That is not the question. The leaders

of the Right Centre have made the Republic against the King and against the Royalists. Now that the Republic is made, they wish to rule it, still against the King and against the Republicans. . . . They want 1830 over again. . . . I shall never consent to help them in their aspirations, and, under pretext of Social conservation, to serve them as a ladder with which to reach their goal more easily. I prefer those who fight us openly to those who have forsaken us, who have sealed their separation by the doings of the 25th February, and who, now, *solicit the abdication of the King.*" Everything lay in those last words. The idea of an abdication of the Comte de Chambord, demanded or imposed, in favour of one of the Orleans Princes, was then at the bottom of those disputes between the partisans of the two families. Those men, who subordinated their reputation, their honour, to their fidelity, turned their eyes towards the far-away Prince whose example dictated their conduct.

They were, individually, very honest men. Still, the sad recollection of those parliamentary manœuvres weighed upon their authors, upon the memory of the Assembly and upon the *régime* itself.

For a work to be good, its origin must be pure. The spirit of revenge which was rife during the birth throes of the Republic, harmed it by a too absolute exclusion of persons and groups which it could not, unharmed, do without. It is true that the "Conservatives," in their proud stupidity, had pushed their adversaries against the wall of the coalition which set them aside; the institutions suffered by the double and contrary blunder of their founders.

Mean interests and low preoccupations profited by the stroke which Fate had placed in the hand of M. de la Rochette. The Marquis de Dampierre writes (p. 348):

"M. de la Rochette, violent in his affections and in his aversions, died of the sorrow for what he had done, which he had ended by feeling; but how many are still living without showing any apparent remorse. Being passed without recognition by former colleagues and friends hardly seems to trouble them. May God forgive them. But those who have witnessed their mischievous compromises cannot."[1]

IV

Rage filled men's hearts. It was written that that illustrious Assembly, which had inherited all the misery and ruin of France, should perish in a slow agony. It dragged with it such a heavy past! The War, the Commune, the Fusion, the 24th May, the 17th May, the 25th February—those recollections and those dates were accumulated on the last hours of its existence, and oppressed it like a nightmare.

The Commune first of all. Would the Assembly wash off the blood-stain by an act of clemency? The hour had not come. On the 20th December, 1875, the Pardons Committee presided over by M. Martel and of which M. Voisin was the Reporter, rendered accounts to the Assembly. Out of 9,596 sentences pronounced between the 15th March and the 30th November, the Committee had examined 6,501 appeals. Out of 110 death sentences, the Committee admitted 84 pleas for

[1] M. de la Rochette died a few weeks later, on the 19th January, 1876, without having occupied his Life-Senator's seat. On the 5th February, the Comte de Chambord wrote to M. de la Rochette's eldest son a letter of condolence, which contains an allusion approving of the conduct of his representative in the National Assembly: "Ernest de la Rochette has always obeyed the one idea of the fulfilment of duty. . . . Your father ever was the first in the breach, . . . the calculations of ambition were nothing to him, he pursued his object in the midst of contradictions and trials" *Correspondence of the Comte de Chambord*, 1841 *to* 1880. Paris, 1880.

pardon, and rejected 26. The sum total of appeals entertained by the Committee was 2,570. There remained, on the 1st July, 1878, 3,609 transported convicts, 233 men and 7 women sentenced to hard labour, and 1,647 persons condemned to various penalties throughout France. In all 5,496 prisoners.

The Pardons Committee.

M. Naquet rose and demanded an amnesty. Everybody exclaimed: the Left feared to compromise its renown, on the eve of the election, by a premature motion. M. Naquet, encouraged by the Right, was attacked and systematically interrupted. Old disputes were revived. After M. Naquet, M. Georges Périn, an honest, straightforward man, whilst not in complete agreement with the previous speaker, pleaded the cause of the transported convicts, for whom he demanded more indulgence. M. Naquet was accused of having acted independently of the groups of the Left. M. Langlois moved the previous question, which was carried, amidst cheers, by a show of hands. An interpellation demanded by M. Naquet was adjourned for six months.

Other traces remained of great discords; twenty-seven departments were still under martial law, after five years! Were the elections to take place under such a *régime!* This was to be the object of the last party battle.

The Government had cleverly joined the question of the *régime* of the Press to that of the state of siege. By subordinating the latter to the former, it intended to reserve for itself weapons, in view of the electoral period. M. Dufaure had introduced the two-headed Bill on the 12th November. A Committee, with a Left majority, had refused to enter into the views of the Government. Reversing the proposed order, it concluded, through its Reporter, M. Albert Grévy: (1) in favour of a Bill in one clause, stating that the *régime* of martial law had come to an end throughout France; (2) in favour of a

pure and simple rejection of the Press Bill presented by the Government.

M. Buffet, in a combative mood, started interrupting from the beginning of the reading of the Report.

He followed M. Albert Grévy, and asked the Assembly to discuss the Government Bill without reference to the Report of the Commission. He then jumped, without transition, straight into party quarrels: "You know our programme, we ourselves have offered it for discussion. We have been able to realise it with the firm and constant assistance of the Conservative majority in this Assembly. . . ." Which majority? called voices from the Left. M. Buffet continued: "It is no doubt thought that that majority has been vanquished. . . . Well, I ask you, where is the victorious majority?" A wit: "In the Senate!" But nothing could now stop the President: "The Government has in nowise made of the Press Bill, the *ransom*, as it has been called, for raising the state of siege. But it has taken legitimate precautions to defend public order against those who threaten it. If the country is to pass safely through this crisis, it must have, besides knowledge of the peril, the double conviction that its Government is armed, and firmly decided to make use of its weapons; it must also make personal, courageous and energetic efforts, efforts in which all honest men must join. . . ." Many members of the Left arose: "But we are honest men! . . ." The storm had risen.

M. Buffet attacks the Left.

M. Buffet faced it; he returned to the burning subject of the election of the Life-Senators. "We are, and we shall be faithful to the Conservative Union," and turning towards the Left: "*You* have other allies! Did you expect us to pay your debts of gratitude? . . . Though gratitude weighs but lightly on great hearts. . . . Will the Honourable M. Gambetta tell us that that precious

and salutary alliance should be continued in the face of Universal Suffrage? . . . If the Government should now be suspected of contracting certain alliances, you will recognise that you would have to say, "Listen to our preaching, but do not look at our practice." This rain of sarcasms ended by the evocation of the supreme resource, the only one left, the "mission" of the Marshal: "for it has certainly entered into no one's thoughts that the President of the Republic, a Marshal of France, the victor of Magenta and Malakoff, should ever resign himself to become the toy of Radical factions, the passive instrument of Radical exigencies!"

These last words contained a threat. The Left of the Assembly was irritated at the sharpness of the attack; the reconstituted Right applauded furiously. In vain, wise men interposed. M. Laboulaye, answering M. Buffet, said very justly: "I do not know whether such fiery words will make for Conservative union, they assuredly will not bring about union in the country. . . ." And again: "Words in France are of singular importance; through words, war is procured and men are proscribed. . . . It is not allowable thus to label men and to exclude them from the great family of Frenchmen. . . ." These words fell unheeded. M. Dufaure himself, with a wise intervention, failed to re-establish calm.

M. Jules Favre, M. Louis Blanc, rose like ghosts of former times. M. Jules Favre spoke of M. Buffet's Bonapartist accomplices; M. Louis Blanc declared that the Bill savoured of a plebiscite. . . .

The Committee's Bill was rejected. The Government now felt itself supported by an unshakeable majority.

The next day, M. Dufaure demanded and obtained urgency.

M. Raoul Duval now stirred up the embers of strife.

He attacked that persistent majority of the Right, still standing in the road, in spite of the blow it had sustained in the preceding week. It represented the last fortress of dying Orleanism, and had to be destroyed: "The vanquished is the Orleanist party, that party which, officially deleted from the political map since the loyal declaration of Vienna, none the less continues to exist, waiting for eventual and Providential benefits. It is time that that party should declare itself, should tell Universal Suffrage what it is, what it thinks, what it wants. . . ."

It was against that party that the manœuvre was directed, of which M. Raoul Duval openly boasted: "The party to which I allude had taken comfort in the hope of evading judgment in the person of its leaders. It had hoped that, by taking refuge in the Senate, these men would avoid rendering account to their fellow-citizens, and escape the cruel necessity of pronouncing before the electors. . . . We have been asked for an explanation of our vote: here it is. After the series of successive evolutions by which we have seen that intangible party pass from Right to Left and from Left to Right, now against the dynasty which it demanded, and now proclaiming the Republic which it hated, we have wished to know what was the political goal which our colleagues seek to attain. And, as France would not have known it either, we have done what we did in order to obtain more light. We have placed into the Senate men who represent well-defined opinions; Republicans and Legitimists. But, if we have not nominated the nameless party, it is in order to make it reveal itself. It has made reservations, hidden under dissimulation, broken its own engagements. . . . We wished to force it to speak, to give explanations; we have succeeded. . . . They must now explain themselves before the country."

The Duc de Broglie speaks.

The Duc de Broglie answered; it was well that his tragic figure should arise at the supreme moment. He spoke "on a personal question," bravely drawing upon himself the whole burden of anathema. But his was a counter attack, not an explanation. . . . The vanquished nobleman, fallen upon the ruins of his work, threw a last handful of mud in the face of victorious Destiny. He cursed the understanding which had excluded him and his friends from the ranks of the Senate. "It is not a majority," said he, "but a coalition of persons between whom there is nothing in common but resentment and hatred. . . ."

Hatred! This terrible word marked the close of the history of a party which had for five years been master of the Assembly and of the country. A voice cried: "This is the day of malcontents." Another: "Resign yourselves to fate." M. Ernest Picard, another veteran, emerging from his retreat, spoke harshly of the bitterness of the death-agony in which "disappointed ambition" still struggled. It was time to decide the question of the Bill. M. Dufaure, in a prudent speech, pointed out that, if the Government were protected, it would on the whole benefit the Republic and the constitutional *régime*.

Clause I. of the Bill, slightly modified in a Liberal sense, was then carried.

M. Jules Favre having again intervened in the discussion of Clause II., an incident took place between M. de Valon and the former Minister of National Defence. More violence, more recriminations ensued. Each step seemed to bring about a crisis.

Martial Law.

M. Challemel-Lacour's white beard now appeared, like the sea-bird, precursor of storms. Clause IX. was being discussed; it concerned the raising of the state of siege, save in Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, and Algiers. M. Challemel-Lacour was Deputy for

Lyons. His speech was the expected answer to the speech of M. Buffet, it left no sarcasm without retort. "The Minister of the Interior does not know France well. He only knows it through the reports of his police agents" (this was an allusion to the Lyons affair in which M. Buffet's agents had sadly blundered, and which had brought about the supersession of M. Ducros). "The country is quiet. Paris, Lyons, and Marseilles, which are specially pointed at, give an example of order and of industrial activity. It is you who create disorder, and who make a bogey of it because you want it. . . . You may say what you like, you will never make anybody believe that, in those large towns, any designs are seriously harboured against property or the Constitution. . . . And yet we are told that it is in those great centres that evil passions prevail: this means that M. le Vice-Président du Conseil feels or even knows that the policy he has adopted does not meet with general approbation. I agree—his system of policy and administration is indeed not approved of: it is detested. This wretched and untimely imitation" (here protests arose, but the speaker continued) "of the proceedings of the Empire" (the President here demanded an explanation, and the orator explained as follows): "I say that it is an imitation of the systems of the Empire, and I call it a wretched one because it is plus equivocation and minus strength."

M. Challemel-Lacour's powerful speech, with its burning invective, was heard with "religious respect," says the President himself. The extent of the blunders committed began to be appreciated, but it was too late to go back.

Exasperation of M. Buffet.

M. Buffet answered with an exasperated vivacity, but weariness prevailed. The last retort, a cutting one, came from M. Challemel-Lacour: "What sort of a Government are you, who have not the strength to go through an electoral period under the

régime of the common law? You dare to call yourselves a government of moral order, and, at the time when Liberty is most necessary, you maintain that supreme disorder, an arbitrary *régime* and exceptional laws."

Those aggressive words ended the struggle, which was to be renewed before the electors.

The Assembly rejected the wording of the Committee by 360 votes to 316. The Government maintained its Bill, merely consenting to the suppression of martial law at Algiers.

The Law of the 30th December, 1875, voted.

On Gambetta's advice, the Left—in order not to lose the same advantage for the other Departments—voted for the Bill, which was at last carried by a show of hands on the 29th December. Thus was passed, amid weariness and discouragement, the law which regulated the Press, that most important subject in a country ruled by opinion. Neither the debate nor the law itself were in proportion with the greatness of the matter. The impression given is that of a temporary, ill-made and "scamped" piece of work. The Assembly's death was not a graceful one.

Last Moments.

It was now time to go. The Assembly accepted the inevitable. For several weeks the date of the Dissolution had been discussed in the lobbies, in committees, and at public sittings. The end of the year was nigh, and it was felt by all that nothing could be started until the following year.

The Assembly had to decide upon the day of its own adjournment, then upon that of the appointment of delegates by the Municipal Councils, that of the elections for the Senate, for the Chamber of Deputies, finally the date of the convocation of the new Parliament.

All this was hurried through. On the 29th December, immediately after the Press Law had been passed, M. Malartre asked that the Assembly should adjourn from

the 31st December to the 3rd January. This was a bridge . . . should it be crossed? The House rose in an indescribable tumult, a veritable fever, accompanied by visible signs of the coming collapse.

On the next day, 30th December, M. Paris announced that the Special Committee, of which he was the Reporter, had decided that there was no reason to retard beyond the 31st December the adjournment of the Assembly. A few urgent Bills remained, which could be carried through with a little haste. M. Gambetta cried from his seat: "We must separate on the 31st December, at midnight, at the latest, whether the Bills are passed or not." "Impossible!" cried good M. Malartre.

The Assembly voted without debate all the Bills which stood on the agenda. A law fixing the dates of the various elections; a law on the *régime* of sugars; a law on concessions to railway companies, a question of vital importance to many constituencies. The Deputies who attempted to voice the claims of their electors, barely obtained a hearing and received no attention. The day was followed by a night-sitting, during which the procession of Bills and divisions continued. On the 31st, at noon, the Permanent Committee was nominated. The sitting was resumed at one o'clock. The text of the Law on the Election of Deputies and that of electoral circumscriptions was distributed and passed.

They had come to the end of the agenda.

The Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier, President of the Assembly, rose and pronounced the following words, which were heard in deep silence:

Gentlemen, after five years' legislation, you have reached the end of your task. You are about to return to the country the mandate which had been entrusted you in the midst of circumstances which enhanced its value and danger.

Scarcely had you met when to the horrors of invasion was added the odious sight of an unexampled insurrection. You vanquished the Commune with

our heroic Army. You made peace; you paid the ransom. . . . Then, you approached the second part of your task; you reorganised our interior administration and settled your political institutions. Each of you had brought into these precincts his convictions, his memories and his hopes. All were subordinate to one and only thought, the love of our country. Hence came this Constitution of the 25th February, an incomplete work, perhaps, but without which you had to fear that the country might again be exposed to despotism and anarchy. You now entrust this work to the loyalty of Marshal MacMahon, to the patriotism of future Assemblies, to the wisdom of the country which has so nobly supported you during five years. . . .

Let us go in trust and confidence, Gentlemen; go to submit to the judgment of the country. Do not fear that it will reproach you with the concessions that you have made for the sake of peace, for you are bringing back intact both the flag and Freedom.

This speech was a truly Liberal one. It was applauded by the great majority of the Assembly.

The minutes were confirmed. The President added: "The National Assembly has come to the end of its agenda. The Assembly now adjourns until the 8th March, 1876, on which day the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies will meet and the powers of the National Assembly come to an end. The sitting is now ended."

Numerous voices on the Left cried, "Vive la République!" On the Right, "Vive la France!" On the Left, "Oui, vive la France, Vive la République, Vive le Président de la République!"

The Assembly separated at six o'clock.

V

Criticism on the Assembly.

The closing speech of the President portrayed the diverse sentiments of the National Assembly on the day of Dissolution: a legitimate pride for services rendered, a certain shame of too recent and too marked violence, and a somewhat veiled confidence in the future.

The National Assembly had taken the country in hand in the midst of ruin and disorder; it now gave it

up repaired and reorganised. Having been forced to assume all responsibilities, it had given way under none of them. It had been supported by one ideal: faith in the necessary survival of France. All parties had ever been agreed on this point: all had warmly and efficiently loved their country. This feeling, exalted by national misfortunes, had imposed mental discipline and active co-operation. The National Assembly, a Power at the same time governing and law-making, had been a *Convention* in the full meaning of the word. It had proved that the French people was capable of governing itself by the authority of its representatives.

Whatever may be the future of the country, this fact can never be deleted from History, that France, on the morrow of unheard of catastrophes, following upon a long period of absolute power, was able to will, to choose, to act for herself. To praise the Assembly is to praise the country who appointed it, to prove that the country was ripe for liberty.

The National Assembly's sufferings were caused by the double task which lay before it: to clear away and to restore. It had to eliminate first of all that spirit of the times, a romantic disposition towards ideals and Utopias. On the other hand, it had also to get rid of the elements of retrograde and coarsely realistic policy by which the Second Empire had adulterated public morals. Then it had to break with its own monarchical fidelity. To accomplish this painful sacrifice, a miracle of good-will and sincerity had to take place, which is the greatest proof of the noble-mindedness of the Assembly.

At the same time as it destroyed, the Assembly repaired and mended. During the five years of its reign, a remarkable series of experiments and tests took place. Everything was loyally tested and tried.

Liberty was tested: never were public debates and

decisions more spontaneous, more independent. There was very little or no governmental or administrative pressure, no falsification of problems or of votes, but reciprocal honesty and loyalty between all parties and the Head of the State—that *loyal* Soldier—amidst violence and unjust reproaches.

The Representative system was tested: by a formal mandate, the Assembly, *without any kind of usurpation*, was invested with every power. It made no abuse of its boundless authority. It proved that an Assembly, a Senate may, in modern as well as in ancient Republics, accomplish great things, as well as and better than a chief alone. Not that it feared the power of one man. At the beginning, it gave an almost sovereign power to its most illustrious member, M. Thiers.

He exerted it with success and glory, but gave it up on the simple injunction of those from whom he derived it. The Assembly wished for a meeker chief; it gave, without peril, to a soldier, a Presidency which had seemed more like a Dictatorship when a simple *bourgeois* occupied it.

Thus, sitting in the palace of Kings, apart from external influences, the Assembly proved systems and merits and decided the fate of the nation.

All the glories of the nation were gathered together there: noblemen of King Charles X's Bed-chamber, fighters of 1830, Parliamentarians of *bourgeois* Chambers, insurgents of 1848, Ministers of the Empire, *débris* of all powers, of all oppositions, met in the lobbies of the Palace and in the Deputies' trains: the Duc de Broglie and M. Louis Blanc, M. Thiers and M. Rouher, Mgr. Dupanloup and M. Littré, M. Buffet and M. Gambetta, all appeared at the same bar.

Types in the Assembly.

The psychology of this Assembly would be badly defined if only those eminent figures were considered. More unimportant physiognomies would

characterise it better. On the long rows of faces, a few features common to all could be seen at a glance; a provincial seriousness, *bourgeois* pompousness, but also the pride of the country gentleman, the affectation of the *parvenu* and the assurance of the *doctrinaire*. Many of them would have made delightful subjects for rapid sketches.

One man, for instance, of a very noble family, a naval officer in 1830, had retired when King Charles X left France. For forty-five years, champing his bit between the four turrets of his ancestral castle, *he had owed the Orleans a grudge*. His hour was to come on the day of the election of the Life-Senators, and he did not waste it. This was the Marquis de Franclieu.

Another, the son of a tax collector, came of a good stock of lawyers. He was born in 1809, and had come from Toulouse to conquer Paris, as is the work of every good Gascon. His handsome face, pretty wit and ready pen had won him a welcome, and he was received at the Abbaye-aux-Bois and allowed to meet illustrious men—Ballanche, Mérimée and even Châteaubriand. Prudent and careful, he succeeded in becoming a contributor to the *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, and he started his political career under the auspices, first of M. Thiers and then of M. Guizot. His name was Léonce de Lavergne. Finally, when he was Deputy for the Gers, an active member of the majority, and on the high road to ministerial office, he was thrown back into the ranks by the Revolution of 1848, and, with his industrious suppleness, became a Professor of Rural Economy. 1870 had found him a man of great merit and experience, but already aged and weary, nearing the end of an honourable, though, on the whole, unsuccessful life. Seated with the Right, to begin with, he had evolved with M. Thiers, M. Casimir-Perier, and M. de Montalivet, and he, the least Republican of men, had been one of the Fathers of the Republic.

Another, again, was an African veteran, who had served under the Princes of Orleans and under the Marshals of the Empire. His tall, strong figure, broad chest and soldierly moustache and imperial were unmistakable. A straightforward, sincere, somewhat shy man; his heavy footsteps resounded rhythmically as he came in through the gallery of Tombs. His name was Joachim-Achille, Comte Rampon. He, too, had gone through an evolution. A good servant of those *régimes* under which France was represented by the flag, when the time came for him to choose, he remembered that he was a son of the Revolution. At heart, a man of the people, he was faithful to the memory of the father who, at the time of the *plébiscite* of 1802, had, it was said, written on the official register, the legendary and untranslatable pun: "Puisqu'il faut ramper . . . . Rampon."[1]

M. de Ventavon, before being Deputy for the Hautes Alpes, was *bâtonnier* at the Grenoble Bar, a bachelor much sought after in society and the idol of Grenoble ladies. Careful of his person, well-dressed and an agreeable speaker, a provincial great man, perhaps a little lost at Versailles, he had his hour of celebrity on the day when he created the Ventavonate.

Some Deputies were pupils of the Jesuits, such as M. Ignace Plichon; others were St. Simonians, such as M. Charton; others, disciples of Father Enfantin, had worn the blue coat with white revers and the name inscribed across the chest, such as M. Broët. There was also a Pontifical Zouave, a soldier of the National Defence, whose arm had been cut off at Patay, a very crusader of the Monarchy, M. Cazenove de Pradine. There were Parisian journalists such as M. Ordinaire, and provincial journalists such as M. de Cumont, who later on became a Minister; there were merchants, like MM. Ancel and

[1] *Ramper*, Fr. "to grovel."

Chesnelong; Professors, like M. Bertauld; men celebrated, like M. Batbie, for their corpulence, or for their baldness, for their exceptional beards; heroes in lavender gloves, such as General Changarnier; knight-errants, like M. de Lorgeril; "druids," like M. Henri Martin. Some thundering orators had been drawn from the ranks by the force of their lungs, such as M. de Fourtou; some, like MM. de Tillancourt, de Gavardie, made interruptions their speciality. . . . Finally, there was the compact, distrusting and redoubtable mass of those "who said nothing."

What was the real thought, the philosophy, of the Assembly of 1871? The great majority of its members were, by their origin, Catholics and believers; by their education and admirations, Romantic and Idealistic; but ultimately in their actions they showed themselves Realistic, materialistic, *classical*, as M. Taine would say.

How can such a contradiction be explained?

It might be said that divergent forces, being almost equal, neutralised each other; but they were not equal at the beginning, when the majority voted for the erection of the Church of the Sacred Heart at Montmartre. Should we suppose that, in spite of appearances, there was some of the fundamental irreligion of the times in the spirit of the Assembly, and even in the minds of a good many of its members? They were Catholics, they accepted Catholic programmes and lived under Catholic influences—but they were not "practising" Catholics, and, at the bottom of their hearts, they were, like everybody in France, for ancient and perhaps racial reasons, uneasy at the thought of a clerical Restoration and averse to a "government of *curés*."

They were Frenchmen, and Voltairean in spite of all. The philosophy of this Assembly was not deep; these men had had little time or inclination for much philosophy.

Little acquainted with Hegel, they naïvely submitted to his doctrines, or what they could understand of his doctrines through the adaptation of M. Victor Cousin. Condillac, rejuvenated by Taine, was enough for them. Their eyes did not soar above the tangible questions of human life. Their ideal was limited to that country which had suffered so much, and which they had to save. What they feared above all was "absolutism": "I belong to a school which only believes in the Relative, in analysis, in observation, in the study of facts, the comparison of ideas, a school which takes into account environment, tendencies, etc."

In these words, Gambetta practically illustrated the spirit of the times and the philosophy of the Assembly, born of the century which had seen the most powerful Liberal and scientific advance ever known, and born of the country which had, amidst hesitations, contradictions and Revolutions, progressed towards a unique and exclusively earthly object: the betterment of the fate of the humble and weak by means of Law and Liberty.

This would also explain the astonishing number of men "consumed" by the Assembly. It chose and then rejected, as if by sheer caprice, every merit, every superiority, every capability, drawing them from its most obscure ranks and overthrowing them from its highest dignities. Ever distrustful, unwilling to be bound by any man's promises, exacting much from those whom it honoured, unforgiving to those whom it set aside; depriving itself of hearing the admired eloquence of M. Thiers, and attentive to the detested speech of M. Gambetta, it offered the singular sight of extreme discord at the very time when engaged in reconstruction and pacification. Thus again was the double operation of eliminating and testing accomplished. New personalities emerged from these slow selections, coming from various

quarters, but trained together on the benches of the Assembly, which finally handed to them the conduct of affairs.

Fallen and new-born greatness, softened passions, resignation, combinations, transactions, in one word: *conciliation*, the whole ended in the *opus major* of the Assembly, the Constitution of 1875 of which the true formula is: Union of the *Bourgeoisie* and the Democracy within the Republic.

Wonderful is the force of the modern spirit: this unexpected Republican Constitution was the work of a Chamber of which the majority was that of the Versailles Assembly. Other works of Liberty, Equality, Laicity and Solidarity, to be accomplished by subsequent Assemblies, also lay in embryo within the institutions of the National Assembly, superior, on the whole, to all other French Assemblies in that it *founded.*

It opened the doors of the future, without always divining, it is true, the destruction and alluvions which might follow the torrent.

The National Assembly was great: less for what it achieved than for what it outlined; less for what it did than for what it willed.

It was great because it truly represented France: France with her boldness and uneasiness, her cult for the ideal and her toleration of facts, her taste for riots and the clear good sense which, after exalting proper pride and vanity, ends by clinging to that which is simple, solid and just.

The National Assembly, in its good faith, prepared for France stability, peace, and freedom, and, for Humanity, more goodness. Of it may be said what it said of M. Thiers: "It has deserved well of the country."

CHAPTER VII

FRANCE AND THE ELECTIONS OF 1876

I. Universal Suffrage.—The Nation and the Parties.—Electoral Organisation.—The Cabinet and the elections.—Senatorial elections.—Composition of the Senate.

II. Legislative elections.—Candidates and Programmes.—Gambetta leads the campaign: Speeches at Lille, Bordeaux and Paris.—The ballot of the 21st February, 1876, is favourable to the Republic.

III. M. Buffet resigns; M. Dufaure is provisionally entrusted with the Presidency of the Council.—Gambetta's speech at Lyons.—Second ballots.—Composition of the Chamber of Deputies.—Formalities for the transmission of powers.—Early sittings of the Chamber and of the Senate.

I

AT last the moment had come when the French People might, peacefully and according to Constitutional regulations, make its will known.

First Elections.

In 1871, the urgency of events and the hardness of the times had strained the expression of public feeling. The National Assembly, "elected in a day of misfortune," had been the uneasy offspring of that hour of anguish. During five years, "Representation" had acted in the name of the nation. It had made peace, repressed a terrible insurrection, reorganised the fiscal system, chosen a system of government, framed constitutional laws—all that without consulting the country.

The latter was now to pronounce, to enter into the road opened out before it or to swerve aside, to accept

the harness of the Constitution of 1875 or to break it to pieces.

The difficulty for the politicians of those days—as for the historians of to-day—was to discover the obscure aspirations of those 36,000,000 Frenchmen, scattered over an immense territory, forming a mass without cohesion, unaccustomed to public business, with no respected traditions, no solid framework. In a country, where and at a time when there were now no dynasty, no nobility, no ruling classes, no provinces, no communes, no corporations, no organisations in any way forming a nucleus of public life, how could the People become conscious of itself and express its feelings?

It was both an experience and an experiment which was about to be attempted. It is difficult to judge, even after thirty years, whether the cards were well or ill dealt.

In order to explain and to judge, History requires singular perspicacity and perfect serenity. Passions which were burning brightly, are not yet extinguished. Public opinion was ignorant of itself, smoky polemics darkened everything. Consequences have not yet been fully developed. The future, and a greater light thrown on details now still unknown, will alone give us the means of pronouncing judgment. We can but attempt a first account.

Universal Suffrage before 1876.

Since 1848, Universal Suffrage existed and was in force. But, under the Second Republic, it had not had time to know itself, and, under the Second Empire, it had merely adhered to the will of the Prince, *plébiscites* being but a form of obedience.

The legendary Mayor boasted of "always having agreed with M. le Préfet, whoever he may have been." Thus practised, Universal Suffrage was but a block handled by the administrative crane. In Paris and the

larger towns, it had barely attempted a few sudden and accidental explosions.

And now, it would have to move by itself. French politics were suddenly to be decentralised and individualised. The impulse was to come from the least village. Master of himself, the elector had to give himself his "reasons." He might assume that authority of which his masters had made for themselves a monopoly by declaring him unworthy and incompetent!

It was French History set once again upon its basis, but turned, overturned, perhaps.

A double appointment was made by the new law for the electors of the whole of France: the Senatorial elections were to take place on the 30th January and the Legislative electors on the 20th February. Those twin operations realised the whole spirit of the Constitution, of which it has already been said that it sanctioned the understanding between the middle and the lower classes.

The Senatorial electors—Deputies, General or *arrondissement* Councillors and Municipal delegates—were appointed by an initial vote by Universal Suffrage or by its chosen. That mode of procedure, which restricted the suffrage, secured a *bourgeois* character for the coming first act of the Constitution; popular electors, naturally embarrassed, were bound to choose their habitual leaders, and would look for guidance to the men in frock-coats who had hitherto held the rudder. Gambetta was right when he saw in the mechanism of the Senatorial recruiting a mode of educating Universal Suffrage.

But that *bourgeois élite*, now imposed upon the nation by the force of circumstances, was itself very vaguely instructed in what it had to do at the second electoral operation, the Legislative elections. Everything was fluid and uncertain in the immense swirl which was taking

place; crystallisations had had no time to form, and foundation-stones were not yet laid.

Divergence between Paris and the Provinces.

A few general outlines began to appear, however. For instance, there was a remarkable divergence of views between the great towns, especially Paris, and the provinces. Urban candidatures on the one hand, rural candidatures on the other, were bound to take into account different, sometimes rival, tendencies and interests. It was no easy thing to drive that difficult pair towards the same goal. A Republic founded by the towns and viewed with suspicion in the villages, drawn on either side by its Conservative and Revolutionary elements, presented extraordinary complications; a common programme could only be formulated by the help of singular prudence and ingenuity. As is often the case when agreement is difficult, it was to be found in common hatred rather than in similar aspirations.

Diversity between North and South.

There was no less diversity between the North and the South, the East and the West. It seemed as if the suffrage offered a first example of that curious, spiral development, which, bringing ideas to the different parts of the country in succession, hands them on to one locality as others leave it, and thus, by a continuous progress, ensures equilibrium and stability for the whole. The North and the East, those regions which had been invaded, were the first to come to the Republic. Gradually, the South and the Centre were to be conquered; as to the West, it was long to remain the citadel of traditional parties; even now, certain quarrels have not been settled which have long been forgotten everywhere else.

Political effects of the loss of Alsace-Lorraine.

By the loss of two frontier provinces, the influence of the Northern or Teutonic element was diminished. Alsace and Lorraine had always paid to France a special tribute of

devotion and capacity. The best soldiers, too, are always born on the frontier. The incomplete edifice now in course of reconstruction, was to feel the lack of this material. The South, by the cleverness, tact, eloquence and political sense innate in its races, acquired a preponderating influence. It is sufficient to mention M. Thiers and Gambetta.

No less than blood and traditions, interests might have caused a dangerous dissociation in a nationality less solidly built. Turned towards inland seas, exposed to the burning rays of the sun, given up to the culture of the vine, the olive and other fruit-trees, the South—recently tried by the phylloxera plague—remained, with its great mercantile harbours, faithful to the idea of Free Trade. The North, touched or threatened in its industry, had not yet modified its views; but, under the impulse of its manufacturers, harassed in their turn by the growing labour problems, it was groaning under the fiscal burden which resulted from the war. Fortunately, this grave subject had not yet reached an acute crisis, and the evolutions which were to have such deep consequences on future politics were still very far ahead.

Socialism.

Socialism, contained and practically stupefied by the thunderstroke of the Commune, was put on one side for a long time: the attention of public powers was barely claimed, now and then, by some Labour demands. This truce was favourable to the dawning *régime*: the threat which had been so urgent and so redoubtable in 1848, did not hover over immediate politics. This slumber, which was only apparent, perhaps did harm: the "indifferentism" of that initial hour allowed a subterranean work to be accomplished which would have been less dangerous in the full light of day. The phase which had opened was political rather than social. The essential divergence, discord even, lay between the

bourgeoisie, all-powerful yesterday, and the popular masses, which now controlled the ballot. The Constitution had been intended to reconcile them under the word Democracy, but it had brought them together without welding them.

The *Bourgeoisie.*

The culture of the *bourgeoisie*, acquired under former *régimes*, was bookish and classical; their habits, doctrinal, doctoral, timorous and parsimonious. The *bourgeoisie* allowed itself to be led by financiers and lawyers, giving very little thought to all that was not its immediate interest. It had no organisation, no views outside or beyond itself. But, to redeem itself and to fulfil worthily the mandate which modern times continued to entrust to it, it had its intelligence, its fine faculties of comprehension and application, and its prudence, greater than its humanity.

Already, from the deeper strata of the nation, the element was beginning to emerge of which M. Gambetta had predicted the advent—foremen, railway officials, small tradesmen, publicans, veterinary surgeons, schoolmasters—an ardent, active element, in whom were exaggerated the general dispositions of the French people, its impressionability, impetuosity and its individual pride, born of the diffusion of riches and education and of the fanatic love of Equality. There lay the potential ferment. But would this element, by its action more instinctive than intentional, bring about favourable combinations or dangerous explosions?

The people of the towns, damaged by the useless and absurd attempt to withdraw from national unity, had barely recovered: devoid of leaders, bending under the necessity of the time, it did not resist the ruling of the more advanced portion of the *bourgeoisie*, whilst trying to establish on a wider and more concrete basis the programme of its future claims.

The rural populations hardly knew what was meant by that Republic, in whose name they were now to be governed. Education had made little progress; the Press had not made its way to the villages; railways as yet only connected important towns with each other. Localities which had suffered from the invasion, families whose affections and interests had been touched, had conceived hatred and disgust for the authors of the war. The notables of each village, most of them compromised by the Imperial administration, had lost their authority: a few generous noblemen, a few country squires, did not suffice to maintain the prestige of the aristocracy; land-owners and farmers brought to bear all the weight of their influence, but that was already diminished. Rural suffrage was a mere dust, unprepared and without cohesion.

It is not astonishing that political parties, seeking for a framework which all of them lacked, should have singled out the few organisations which remained standing amidst universal dissolution.

Administration. First of all, the Administration. Administration, particularly local administration, has imposed itself upon public life in France ever since the First Empire: the postman distributes letters, newspapers, ballot-papers, and good doctrines; the schoolmaster teaches how to read, how to write, and how to vote. This interference is accepted meekly enough by the people, whose deference, adroitness, and good-nature all at once lend a willing ear to the official and receive from him that ballot-paper which will be agreeable to Monsieur la Préfet.

Under M. Buffet, in the time of "moral order," the administration followed with a certain regret, the instructions, reserved on the whole, contained in Ministerial circulars. Having remained almost intact

when the Empire had foundered, it thought that the services rendered to the "good cause" would bring their reward, and it prepared to exert a somewhat more efficacious, less attenuated action. The Opposition denounced "official candidatures."

The Clergy.

Another organisation, hierarchised and centralised, existed over the whole surface of the territory: the Clergy. In towns, in boroughs, in villages, the Catholic priest was everywhere. From his pulpit he preached, speaking alone to assembled people. He was a Professor of morals: since the vote was an act of conscience, he was ruler of the vote. What better guide could be found than he, who through earthly ways could show the road to Heaven? If a man felt any mistrust, there were his wife, his children, the thousand and one means of which the priest could dispose, the secret of the confessional, access into the house, the assistance of charity, etc.

And then the priest knew what he wanted, or it was known for him. The Bishop was master in his diocese. Important personalities, nominated by former *régimes*, were at the head of the Episcopate, and now enjoyed the Papal authority and infallibility. They mixed in political strife, with uncompromising opinions, convictions, and prejudices.

Ultramontanism.

The last decisions from Rome had annihilated the Gallican spirit and levelled everything to Ultramontanism. The lower clergy was even more ardent than the clerical aristocracy. For those who had read Louis Veuillot from their Seminary days, the Revolution was the Apocalyptic Beast.

In 1848, the clergy, who had never had much tenderness for the Government of Louis Philippe, had had an almost unanimous impulse towards the Republic, and blessed the Trees of Liberty. The Liberal laws, voted

by the Assembly under the influence of MM. de Montalembert and de Falloux, with the assistance of M. Thiers himself, had not sufficed to maintain the majority of the clergy in those sentiments. The Empire had found amongst most of its members, if not devotion, at least deference. After the issue of the *Syllabus*, the last traces of Liberal Catholicism had disappeared, and the clergy, high and low, acceding to orders from Rome, had risen as one man against "modern liberties."

This very same clergy was ready to come to the assistance of the Conservative parties. How could those parties carry abnegation so far as to refuse such help?

The Clergy and the Conservative parties.

Should it be said that there was, properly speaking, an understanding, a settled compact between the leaders? Principles were the same, doctrines were identical; that was enough for the moment. There were Bonapartist Bishops, Legitimist, Orleanist Bishops: but the Conservative cause was common to all. Let "Society be saved!" the rest could be left till after the victory. The *entente* was concluded tacitly, without useless phrases.

Some more prudent, reserved and sensible ecclesiastics instinctively felt the dangers of interference. But they formed a small and timid minority, held in respect by the assurance of others. They were called lukewarm. Finally, embarrassed by their isolation, stung by reproaches and epigrams, they too followed the stream.

This was a decisive moment for the future of the clergy and of Catholicity. A "politic" Pope, a Leo XIII, might, perhaps, in a flash of superior foresight, have imprinted a different direction. But Pius IX, gentle and irritable, inconsolable at the loss of Rome, could but weep and curse, anathematise, or close his eyes and shed tears; and the exalted *personnel* who surrounded him, though more realistic than evangelistic,

encouraged his dreams and did not think of stemming the flood of his touching and dangerous exhortations.

From the top to the bottom of the ecclesiastical scale, if a blunder was committed (the designs of the Church are hidden), it was instinctive and spontaneous rather than intentional and deliberate. If the campaign was led with beating drum and unfurled banner, it was because it seemed a very crusade. An ardent optimism, born of political passion and clerical presumption, did not even allow time for reflection. The Church was the Church and could not be mistaken. The Church dictated the Law and could not err. The Church was Authority itself and could not fail. Nobody thought of an eventual retreat. God would not forsake his own!

The action of the religious ferment during the crisis of political organisation which France was going through may well be deplored. There was still, on either side, a desire to spare sincere convictions. At the beginning, the "anti-clerical" policy was aimed merely at the secular ambitions of a portion of the clergy; on the other hand, a number of fervent Catholics spoke, without much difficulty, the formula obtained by centuries of struggle: "Liberty of conscience." Some understanding might have been reached, or, at any rate, time might have been gained.

But having said as much, why should we minimise the duel which was beginning? Above material interests, the conflict rose as high as thought and sentiment can attain: it was the problem set by the sixteenth century, debated by the eighteenth, held in suspense, with its painful uncertainties, by the unfinished nineteenth century: is Man capable of finding his own way to goodness? Does Providence act in the council of Conscience by a permanent revelation of the Church? Is Grace or Liberty the cause of good and evil?

Ever the same dispute, transmitted by one age to another, and swung by each generation in the rhythmical alternative of faith or doubt, day or night, during the short passage of Man between birth and death. This history of a critical and heroic period would be incomplete if it did not penetrate as far as this sensitive crevice of the human soul.

Other Churches.

As opposed to the powerful ecclesiastical organisation, antagonistic organisations seemed weak and rudimentary. There were, first of all, the other recognised churches, energetically Republican, and willing to provide resources. Minorities are active, militant; they are naturally contrary to what is, since what is is contrary to them. Feeling themselves crushed by numbers, they have recourse to other means. The prudence of a wise government should allow some play for those inevitable and sometimes angular movements of minorities.

Free-masonry.

Masonic Lodges also undertook, from that moment, a campaign in connection with the principal political and social questions, and particularly suffrage organisation and Educational Reform. Clause II. of the Constitution voted in 1865 by the Grand Orient of France declared that Freemasonry "did not concern itself with State Constitutions; in the exalted sphere in which it places itself," adds the same document, "it respects the political sympathies of each of its members; all discussion on those subjects is formally prohibited at its meetings."[1]

It is true at the same time, that the Constituent Assembly of Italian Masonry had already decided, at its sitting of the 2nd May, 1872, that "Lodges have

[1] Those declarations disappeared from the Constitution voted by the General Assembly of the Grand Orient in its 1884 Session, ratified by the Lodges on the 15th February, 1885.

the right to discuss questions of a religious or political character, since Masonry makes a study of all social questions without restrictions in kind or degree."

Those two documents probably represent the double tendency which will for ever divide societies. In fact, Freemasonry, in the hundred years which it has taken to reach its full extent in Europe, and in France, has devoted itself to the Liberal, or more accurately speaking, the Anti-Roman cause. Often, in times of struggles and persecutions, it has by its secrecy and universality been the inviolable refuge of hunted free thought and of slumbering Reform.

Its action on the French Revolution and on the political crises which have followed each other in France in the course of the nineteenth century cannot be denied. Already under the Restoration, Lodges and Secret Societies were attempting to found the Republic.

Under the July Government and the Second Republic, the ruling activity of Freemasonry asserted itself. The delegation of Free Masons of every rite received by Crémieux and Garnier-Pagès in the name of the Provisional Government (March 1848), declared that "Forty thousand Freemasons, from 500 workshops, have but one heart and one soul to acclaim you." And the good Crémieux answered: "The Republic will do what Masonry does; it will become the visible sign of the union of nations throughout every quarter of the globe, along every side of our triangle." The universal bearing of these words is remarkable.

Under the Second Empire, Freemasonry accepted as Grand Masters, Prince Murat, Marshal Magnan and General Mellinet. It made little progress; but the work of the Lodges went on and thoroughly preserved its fidelity to the Democratic and Republican idea.

Among the leading men of the Opposition, a good many became affiliated, owing to the necessities of the case. This framework was quite ready when the Revolution of the 4th September burst out.

Thus, at the moment when the struggle was again resumed, just as the Clerical organisation was naturally disposed to lend a hand to works of Catholic and social defence, so the Masonic organisation offered itself for the defence of free thought and of the Democratic cause.

It was at the double elections of 1848 that these opposing forces were to come face to face. It is difficult to appreciate accurately the real authority and efficacious action of the Lodges at that time. They, too, knew internal dissensions and contradictions. In most of the larger towns, rites and traditions were scrupulously observed by a small group, headed by a veteran. A larger number of citizens, drawn by curiosity, attracted by the force of fraternity and cohesion, were affiliated without being very assiduous. However, the ardour of strife and the greatness of the peril gave back to the Lodges activity and a real authority in the critical period which was commencing.

The number of adherents, ardent or lukewarm, of Freemasonry, was at least 50,000, but the proportionate influence was far more considerable. Continuity of design, vigour in attack and enforced silence stimulated an efficient zeal.

The celebration, on the 7th July, 1876, of the anniversary of the reception into the Lodge *Clémente Amitié* of two eminent men, MM. Littré and Jules Ferry, who had entered Masonry a year before, was quite an event. M. Littré read an important speech on: *The duty of Man towards himself and his fellow-creatures.* M. Wyrouboff, Littré's friend and collaborator, presented a vigorous

treatise on the condition of Education in France, specially regarding the Dupanloup Law of 1875, relating to Higher Education. Finally, Jules Ferry pronounced a harangue in which he celebrated the advent of Positivism into Masonry, because, he said, "Masonry is Positivist without knowing it."

A few extracts from Jules Ferry's speech summarise the ideal theory of Freemasonry at that time. "Freemasonry has found its place; it reacts against the two principal enemies of modern Free Thought: Mysticism on the one hand and intellectual frivolity on the other; two adversaries which we see, in these times, agreeing to coalesce against progress. Mysticism is your hereditary enemy, and you labour constantly to destroy it. And frivolity, worldly frivolity, voluntarily blind, thinks it easier not to see questions than to try to solve them. Pascal has a fine phrase on the subject; he said: 'Men having been unable to cure death, poverty, and ignorance, it has occurred to them, in order to be happy, not to think about them.' You do not belong to that school, for you have not made up your minds to accept ignorance or poverty. Ignorance is your personal foe, and you think of nothing but to fight it. As to the problem of poverty, you have not accepted it either, and, by fighting ignorance, you fight poverty. . . . That is indeed the meaning of your old legends, which are very touching and very beautiful. . . . Masonry has rested, ever since its beginning, on the instinct of human progress. There is no doubt that, taking things as a whole, what has characterised the advance of humanity, especially during the last hundred years, is a constant increase of sociability and charity. This phenomenon can be characterised in one word: it is, more and more, the *duty* of the stronger superseding the *right* of the stronger. . . ."

Charity or solidarity, universality or Catholicity,

Sociability or humanity, the object was the same in the two camps. Why should they have been so violently opposed?

Electoral Organisation.

None of the political parties seems to have thought of effecting a general organisation in Paris specially in view of the elections. The Bonapartist party had created in 1875 the famous Central Committee of the Appeal to the People, presided over by M. Rouher, and concerning which political discussions had taken place. The Orleanist party received its orders from the Changarnier group. The Legitimist party was directed, as we know, under the high authority of the Comte de Chambord, by the "bureau" sitting in Paris, and headed by the Marquis de Dreux Brézé. A Royalist trust fund was constituted with MM. de Blacas, Aubry and Bontoux as trustees. The effectual leader of the Republican party was M. Gambetta, surrounded by the friends who met in the offices of the *République Française;* but there were many different shades in the various groups of the Left.

In the Departments, there was nothing beyond local committees, themselves much hindered in their action by the Government. Public meetings were prohibited almost everywhere, banquets were absolutely forbidden.

Between those initial difficulties and the scattering of efforts due to the *scrutin d'arrondissement*, electoral organisation was practically absent.

The Buffet Cabinet itself approached that great test of the first Constitutional elections in a spirit which reflected at the same time the uneasy humour of its President, its internal dissensions, and the ambiguity of the Septennal system. The electors should have been given a great example of peace and concord, of rigorous discipline in the chief and members of the Cabinet. Instead of which, and with the best intentions, a very bad impression was produced.

M. Buffet and M. Léon Say.

In the early days of January 1876, the electoral period being open, it became known that M. Léon Say, Minister of Finance, was a candidate for the Senate in the Department of Seine-et-Oise, and that he had signed, with MM. Gilbert Boucher and Feray, of Essonnes, Moderate Republicans, a common programme. "Our programme," ran this document, "holds in a few words: (1) to accept the Constitution unreservedly, and to respect scrupulously the powers which it confers on Marshal McMahon, President of the Republic; (2) to look upon the revision clause as a door open to improvements in the Republican Government, and not as a means of fighting and overthrowing it; (3) to make every effort to preserve our country from a Revolution, *whatever it may be.*" This *whatever it may be* was looked upon as revolutionary.

M. Buffet became angry. At his request, Marshal MacMahon sent for M. Léon Say on the 8th January and begged him to withdraw his signature from such a manifesto. M. Léon Say refused to do so. The Marshal let it be seen that he expected a resignation, which M. Léon Say immediately offered. But M. Dufaure declared that, if his friend retired, he would retire also. M. Wallon, M. Caillaux, the Duc Decazes would follow him. . . . Before such a catastrophe, M. Buffet took fright and beat a hasty retreat. On Friday the 14th, the *Journal des Débats* announced that it was "authorised to declare that M. Léon Say would make no change in the common circular that he had signed with MM. Feray and Gilbert Boucher."

Instructions to prefects were fairly impartial. However, M. Buffet was visibly favourable to the Conservative parties, whilst the circulars of MM. Dufaure and Léon Say were frankly Republican.

The Government was openly hostile to the Republican

Press. The *France* and the *République Française* were prosecuted. M. Buffet was questioned in the Permanent Committee, but he refused to answer. There were official *recommendations* if not official *candidatures.* Certain prefects, MM. Fournès, de Tracy, Guigues, Pascal, Léo, showed remarkable zeal.

The Marshal's Proclamation.

On the 13th January, the President of the Republic intervened in person. In every *commune* in France, a proclamation was posted, in which the Marshal appealed to "the union of men who place the defence of social order, the respect of the laws, and devotion to the country, above memories, aspirations or party engagements." This meant the Conservative Union; the Left was aimed at by the following passage: "We must not only disarm those who would disturb this security in the present, but discourage those who threaten it in the future by the propagation of Anti-Social doctrines and Revolutionary programmes."

Manifesto of the Left Centre.

The leaders of the Republican party also offered their explanations to the electors. Already on the 30th December, the Left Centre, which had on the whole been the winner in the Constitutional vote, and which intended to preserve the mastery of events, had through M. Lanfrey's authorised organ, praised the "Republic, *Liberal, enlightened, tolerant,* open to all." "It remains for you now to defend your work," said M. Lanfrey to his colleagues. "You have to give life to that Constitution, which has not yet received the ratification of Experience, the only decisive consecration. . . . That majority which they deny you, gentlemen, with the strange assumption that a Constitution can be supported exclusively by its enemies, the country will give it to you: it is there, crowding by the doors of the two Chambers. Hold your hand out to it. Speak boldly to the Nation, whom you

have never flattered but whom you have never treated with suspicion. . . . What is your programme? it is the formation of that new majority, founded on respect for the laws, it is the consolidation of the Republic which you have created, it is the advent of the great Constitutional and National party which will carry internecine divisions down a powerful stream of opinion. . . . To a sterile coalition of spite and rancour, let us oppose a policy of union and concord."

M. Dufaure's Circular.

This programme was signed by MM. Bardoux, Maleville, Scherer, Rémusat, Laboulaye. It might have been signed by M. Dufaure. M. Dufaure, moreover, expressed himself with much wisdom, in a circular of the 7th January, regarding those subjects which M. Buffet morosely evaded. "I need not tell you," wrote the Keeper of the Seals, "that by sheltering the Constitutional compact from party attacks, the Legislators did not intend to prevent it from being calmly discussed and loyally criticised. *Unlike the Constitution of* 1852, the Constitution born in 1875, *in the full light of day*, of the free and deliberate will of the Nation, does not require that silence should be enforced around it and does not fear the test of a public debate." In this deft, unobtrusive fashion, M. Dufaure cleverly detached himself from the Bonapartist ties which were, rightly or wrongly, attributed to M. Buffet.

Gambetta's Speech at Aix.

Among those voices which showed the way and explained the doctrine to Department Electors, M. Gambetta's carried farthest. He spoke at Aix on the 18th January, and this speech gives us the most accurate information on the sentiments of the country, for Gambetta's popularity came from his singular capacity of saying what the majority was thinking. He first of all addressed the Senatorial delegates. He maintained his profound views on the utility of the Senate

and on the excellence of the ballot by communal delegations: "As a force of resistance, as an instrument of control over the Power, the Senate will be your refuge and your salvation," said he to the Republicans; and he added these truly prophetic words: "You have received this institution of the Senate with reserve and distrust, you are beginning to see it with a little more confidence. Let a few years go by, wait for the fury which it will excite amongst reactionaries, and I predict that, then, we shall all joyfully defend the Senate."

He denounced the epithet "Revolutionary" which was applied to the Republican party and drew the outline of a "Conservative" programme. "You are Conservative when you demand a society without privileges, such as was organised by the Civil code; you are Conservative when you want liberty for Thought as well as for Prayer; you are Conservative when you desire respect for the child, for the mother and for the father of a family under the protection of laws equal for all; when you appeal to public law, when you ask that each Frenchman should have, at the same time, his share of burdens, of advantages, of protection and of guarantees." He once again pleaded for the union of all Frenchmen, under the ægis of the Republic. To those whom he hoped to reconcile, he said: "You can take in this Republic an immense, a privileged part, for you have leisure, fortune, education and social rank. Come with us, we will secure for you rank, honours, and a strength which will allow you to exert your capacities for the benefit of all."

But he was trying for immediate results, and his speech contains a direct appeal to the President of the Republic, which was remarkable, coming at this hour, and which was repeated in other and even more critical circumstances: "We are constantly described to the President of the Republic as men who dream of nothing but agitation

and revolutionary doctrines. I think I have proved the falseness of those accusations by my words and my conduct. We will persist, we will reduce our detractors to confusion. . . . It will then have to be recognised in every quarter, and especially in the higher spheres of authority, that unworthy guides had previously been followed, and that, by continuing to hold in suspicion men and populations devoted to the Republican order, the risk would be run of misunderstanding a national force. . . ."

The Senatorial Delegates.

On Sunday, the 16th January, the Municipal Councils designated their delegates for the Senatorial elections. This was setting the machinery going. As could easily be foreseen, already acquired situations had the advantage: in the greater number of Communes, the Mayor was designated.

Victor Hugo.

In Paris, Victor Hugo was elected. He published an "Address from the Paris delegate to the delegates of the 36,000 Communes in France": "Electors of the Communes, Paris, the supreme Commune, demands of you—your vote being a decree—to decree, by the meaning of your choice: the end of abuses through the advent of truth; the end of Monarchy through the federation of nations; the end of foreign wars by arbitration; the end of civil wars through amnesty: the end of poverty through the end of ignorance. . . . The Republic pre-exists, it is a natural law. . . . Monarchies, like guardianships, may have some reason to exist as long as a nation is in infancy. . . . A Republic is a nation which declares that it has come of age. . . . Let us accept virility: virility means the Republic. Let us accept it for ourselves, let us desire it for others. Let us wish for other nations that they may have full possession of themselves. Let us offer them Federation, that unshakable basis of peace. . . . The liberty of the nations

is what France is now founding; she is founding it peacefully, and through her own example; the work is more than national, it is continental. Free Europe will be Immense Europe: it will have no labour but its own prosperity."

The "delegates of the 36,000 Communes" were not accustomed to hear such language: for Republicans of the common-sense school, it was a "sonorous phraseology"; the Right Press, and particularly the *Figaro*, covered Victor Hugo with ridicule, and attributed to him with a comical persistence, an uninterrupted series of inane puns.

The Senatorial elections had more than the relative value of an indication. It was known that the most prudent, most reserved portion of the electors was alone consulted for this first act. It was also known that the composition of the future Senate, according to the conception of those who had instituted it, would decide the character and fate of the Republic. Veiled and very far-reaching tactics were concealed under public programmes: electoral addresses must be read with this reservation if we are to understand the true significance of the vote.

The Republican Programme.

In Paris, a common programme was discussed and submitted to the Republican candidates: the Laurent-Pichat programme. It was an exposition of the extreme theory of the Republican party and was to form the basis of the coming demands of Universal Suffrage: Amnesty; an absolute suppression of martial law; liberty for meetings and associations; liberty for the Press; compulsory, free and laic education; defence of civil society against clerical invasion; compulsory and universal military service, without privileges of any kind; the election of Mayors by the Municipal Councils; the *communes* freed from administrative tutelage; revision of

taxation with a view to lightening the burden of labour; separation between Church and State.

Some of these formulæ became stereotyped from that moment: that which mentions the "clerical invasion" is to be found word for word in many electoral addresses.

The Bonapartists.

In general, opposing parties tended to moderate each other according to the feelings attributed to the electors. The Bonapartists accepted the Constitution, whilst claiming an Appeal to the People for 1880; the Extreme Right candidates demanded, in case of a revision, the election of a Constituent Assembly (see M. de Belcastel's electoral address). The Right and Right Centre consented to try for five years (until the end of Marshal MacMahon's term of office) the Constitution which was the law of the country (Duc de Broglie): "Meanwhile the Constitution safeguards all interests for the present; and, in the future, brings with it every progress and protects every right."

The "Conservatives."

In the departments where the "Conservatives" united for the struggle—as in the Gers, where M. Batbie stood with M. Péraldi, a Bonapartist—the programme was to "fight all Revolutionary forces," and the constitution was "the necessary instrument for the maintenance of order and the salvation of the future."

The "Constitutionalists."

More affirmative, the "Constitutionalists" said: "A Constitution exists which is the fundamental law of the country, by which the nature, conditions and title of the Government of France are determined. We have voted it, and we will have it respected."

The Left Centre.

Towards the Centre (MM. Henri Martin, de Saint-Vallier and Waddington in the Aisne, M. Dauphin in the Somme), the Conservative character of the Republic was insisted upon. Now that

institutions had been founded, the real policy of conservation was to practice, support, and, if necessary, improve them, rather than to think of destroying them.

The Republican Left and the Extreme Left.

The Republican Left (M. Jules Favre at Lyons), and even the Extreme Left (M. Challemel-Lacour at Marseilles), praised the stability of the institutions: "We will resolutely conserve the established Government." "We have a regular Government; it only remains to apply it, with its consequences."

The most frequent feature was an appeal to the authority and wisdom of Marshal MacMahon. The name of the Marshal served as a double-edged weapon, to defend the Republic and also to attack it.

The same ambiguous situation prevailed in the Government, especially when relations with the Imperialists were concerned. M. Dufaure, in the Charente Inférieure, was fighting a Bonapartist. At Bordeaux, the Prefect, M. Pascal, opposed M. Ad. Léon, a Constitutionalist, and supported M. Hubert Delisle, a Bonapartist. The Duc de Broglie was allied to the Bonapartists in the Eure whilst trying to withdraw from the influence of M. Janvier de la Motte and breaking with M. Raoul Duval; his *alter ego*, M. Depeyre, was being opposed by the Imperialists in the Lot.

The Ballot.

The elections took place on the 30th January. The result was awaited with great impatience and real emotion. For the first time, the new institutions were on their trial; it was known that the fate of the Constitution of 1875 would depend on the future majority in the Senate. Out of 225 elections, 93 were favourable to the Republican groups: 51 Left Centre, 35 Left, 7 Extreme Left. Amongst the reconciled Liberals of the Right Centre, 15 were elected. The "Conservatives," specially patronised by the Minister of

the Interior, carried off 75 seats; the Extreme Right, for whom this was a disaster, only obtained 2. The Bonapartists, who had relied upon the local position of consular personalities, were disappointed, and had some difficulty in capturing about 40 places.

The votes had been given to notorious persons, frequently former members of the National Assembly. The restricted suffrage thus inaugurated that kind of hierarchy which made of the Chamber of Deputies a school and an ante-chamber for the Senate, and of the Senate the crowning retreat of a long Parliamentary life. In fact, political personages remained at the head of affairs; so that this first trial occasioned no great change.

M. Thiers was elected almost unanimously at Belfort. As to M. Buffet, he was beaten in the Vosges by a Republican list. At La Rochelle, M. Dufaure failed before the Bonapartists. The Cardinal de Bonnechose, in the Aude, and M. Louis Blanc, in Paris, were also defeated.

There were hardly any new names: M. de Saint-Vallier, General d'Espeuilles, Dr. Charles Robin, M. Peyrat, and, most illustrious of all, Victor Hugo, elected by a second ballot, after MM. de Freycinet, Hérold, and Tolain, who had succeeded at the first turn. Either as Life-members or otherwise, the party leaders in the Senate were: the Duc de Broglie, M. Jules Favre, M. Jules Simon, M. de Meaux, M. Challemel-Lacour, and M. d'Audiffret-Pasquier. Other well-known figures were MM. Batbie, Grivart, de Kerdrel, Paris, Tailhand, de Tréveneuc, Bérenger, Waddington, de Belcastel, and de Ventavon.

Among the Life-Senators were also Mgr. Dupanloup, MM. Bertrand, Crémieux, Laboulaye, de Lavergne, Littré, Martel, Casimir-Perier, Wallon, General Changarnier; among the elected Senators: MM. Bocher,

Depeyre, Esquiros, de Gontaut-Biron, Lambert de Sainte-Croix, Magne, de Montgolfier, de Parieu, Pelletan, Pouyer-Quertier, Rampon, Léon Say, Teisserenc de Bort, Marshal Canrobert.

Proportion between Parties.

On the whole, including the 75 Life-members, the final composition of the Senate (300) was as follows:

Left Centre	84
Republican Left	50
Extreme Left	15
Constitutionalists	17
Right Centre and Moderate Right	81
Extreme Right	13
Bonapartists	40

Forces being about equal, each party claimed victory.

In view of the coming Legislative elections, M. Buffet's personal defeat went to the heart of the Government circles; the *Français* of the 1st February wrote: "Nothing is saved, but all is not lost." A poor consolation!

In fact, the Senate was "Centre" and "MacMahonist"; the survival of the spirit of the Rights in the National Assembly was secured, as far as possible, in a country where the majority was undeniably Republican, and where Universal Suffrage was to have the last word.

The Senate would have been far more hostile to the working of Republican institutions if the election of the Life-members had not prevented a more complete realisation of the conception of the Moderate Rights in the National Assembly. Even though hindered, the manœuvre had not absolutely failed, and the ingenious mechanism might yet render the services which were expected of it.

M. Gambetta voiced this first impression in the speech

which he pronounced at Lille (6th February) at the opening of the Legislative electoral campaign. "It has been said that the Senate is not sufficiently advanced. It is reassuring; it will fulfil its true function as 'moderator of public powers.'"

II

Election of Deputies.

It was now the turn of Universal Suffrage. The struggle had hardly begun when it reached its height. The whole young army of political recruits, freed from the ballast which had found its way into the Senate, rushed into the fight, Gambetta leading, full of joy and alacrity.

On Sunday, the 30th January, the electoral period began. Electoral addresses rained down upon constituencies. Owing to the *scrutin d'arrondissement* system, candidatures assumed a remarkably individual character, and differences became strongly marked. In every district, several candidates were standing, a whole new world was arising. Though a few leading ideas were common to all members of each party, these elections were not under any kind of discipline, but, on the contrary, particularly scattered. The questions mentioned in the programmes were the following: the form of government, *i. e.* Revision or the Constitution of 1875; the political basis, *i. e. Bourgeoisie*, or Democracy; the Philosophical Doctrine, *i. e.*. the acceptance or rejection of the temporal influence of the clergy. Social and economic questions remained in the background. The elections were essentially political.

Inspired by the result of the Senate elections, the dominant note remained relatively moderate. The name of Marshal MacMahon was quoted by a great many

candidates; this significant fact was perhaps a little exaggerated by the *entourage* of the President.

The Cabinet and the Elections.

Within the Cabinet, the Premier, Minister of the Interior, was hostile to Republican candidatures: thus, in Paris, in the ninth *arrondissement*, he put up a competitor against M. Thiers, M. Daguin. M. Léon Renault, Prefect of Police, whose anti-Bonapartist zeal had made him conspicuous at the time of the Savary Report, was a Moderate Republican candidate in Seine-et-Oise, against an Imperialist. He was obliged to resign, owing to the interference of M. Valentin, Senator of the Rhône, who had recommended him to the electors; the *Préfecture* of Police was given, on the 10th February, to M. Voisin.

The Vice-President of the Council, M. Buffet, was a candidate at Mirecourt, in that same department of the Vosges where he had failed in the Senatorial elections. It was felt that the situation would be no better in the face of Universal Suffrage. Therefore M. Buffet also stood in other constituencies, at Commercy, Castelsarrasin, and Bourges. He said in his address: "The members of the Conservative Committee of Bourges have offered me this candidature. It is in their eyes a sign of acquiescence in the Conservative policy which I have energetically supported, as a Deputy and as a Minister. . . ." Like the others, he called upon the name of Marshal MacMahon.

The Government, sadly embarrassed, had neither a policy nor a programme. The elections were, on the whole, free and genuine. The Opposition complained loudly; but cases of administrative pressure, due as a rule to the zeal of a few local agents, were rare and not excessive.

M. Thiers being prevented by his great age and by an intentional reserve, Gambetta alone acted directly upon

public opinion. During the whole of February, he remained in the breach, going from one end of the country to another, ever present where the battle raged, where the cause was in danger, a candidate, a counsellor, a tribune—in a word, The Leader. He incessantly urged and counselled moderation. The language of his numerous harangues often rose to philosophical, almost metaphysical heights; it is a remarkable thing that he was always understood by popular audiences, whilst his opponents unjustly reproached his warm and effective speech with a tendency to declamation.

Gambetta and Anti-Clericalism.

At Lille, he explained the anti-clerical policy which was the great preoccupation of his party: "A Republican candidate," said he, "must be a *Liberal.* By Liberal, I understand a man who accepts freedom of conscience in every form, respectful of every cult, professing for every religion the same external esteem, whilst free in his own mind to follow this or that religion or to renounce them all; a man who feels respect for the ministers of every form of worship, as well as for the practices which, near or far, proceed from the regular exercise of a religious, ethical, or philosophical opinion. But, by the word Liberal—and I must be precise here, for I feel that a great peril is to be avoided—I also mean the man who is unwilling to tolerate that any clergy should become, within the State, a political party or faction, striving with other political parties and trying to impose upon them, persons, actions, designs or calculations dealing with the policy of the country. I would have the Church remain the Church. . . . I would have it resigned to its career of purely spiritual consolation, defending its place in that domain, but I would not allow it to sow hatred and discord and slanderous insinuations; there lies peril, anarchy and disorder. Danger lies there, danger not only to France but to

Europe, and the Church, who let it loose, ought not to be surprised to find hatred provoked and reprisals intended. Were not the hesitations and abortions of the French Revolution caused by the duel declared against Revolution by the Ultramontane spirit? It is a latent civil war."

One word in this speech had not fallen by chance from Gambetta's lips. He returned to the idea of "a European danger," and dwelt upon it. Like M. Thiers, he pointed to the danger of a "white policy" within and without.

The Republican party has been blamed for this attitude, which has been called unpatriotic: it was alleged that this was bringing foreign interference into French quarrels. Yet the fact was undeniable, Europe was divided into two camps by the religious question, and it was useful that the very real peril should be indicated. A "Catholic" policy was bound to entail consequences abroad: it was wise to foresee them and right to point them out. Party polemics exaggerated this peril, no doubt, but moderation and fairness are not usually compatible with party strife.

Besides, this is an old accusation; Richelieu was attacked in the same way when he renounced a foreign policy which placed France under Papal supremacy and allied himself with the Protestants against the House of Spain. Gambetta's and Jules Ferry's patriotism is above such allegations.

After M. Thiers, Gambetta approached that delicate subject in these words: "This question has a grave side to it, both at home and abroad. Preoccupations of this nature extend from London to New York, from Berlin to the White House. In England, the cry of alarm comes from Mr. Gladstone, in the United States, from President Grant. Germany, Italy, Russia, the North of Europe

share this preoccupation. Everywhere you find Governments associated to resist, what? the invasion of the Ultramontane spirit. France must not be described by her enemies and rivals as the last refuge of the retrograde and theocratic spirit of the Vatican."

He indicated with prudence the foreign policy of France. The country was forgetting nothing, preparing nothing, but waiting. "I hope that one day, merely through the force of Right, we shall meet again with our lost brethren."

On the 9th February, M. Gambetta was at Avignon, fighting a Legitimist, M. du Demaine. At Cavaillon, he was not allowed to speak. On the 13th February, he was at Bordeaux. The Gironde had just elected three Bonapartist Senators; MM. Hubert Delisle, Béhic and Raoul Duval, senior, and also one from the Extreme Right, M. de Pelleport. Here, his tone was moderate and almost melancholy: the speaker already felt himself surrounded, even in his own party, by the slander and personal violence which so often tarnish the glow of past services and weaken the capacity for rendering more. Envy had already begun to arise. "The People," said he, "should avoid two equally fatal errors: infatuation on the one hand and jealous passion on the other; they should not be so quick to worship or so quick to suspect; between suspicion and enthusiasm, there is a rule of conduct of which the very name should be the rule in politics: Prudence." He repeated M. Thiers' formula, "The future belongs to the wise." Though he enumerated the whole Republican programme, separation between the Church and the State, income tax, secular education, absolute liberty for the Press, right of association—he did not look upon it as immediately realisable. "Far be it from me to say that your representatives will accomplish it between their four years' term of legislation; I

do not believe it, and, to tell the truth, I do not wish it."

What he wanted, was not so much a Reforming Chamber as a Republican Chamber, "a Chamber which could impose the Republic as the form of Government" and "political before everything else." Then followed a definition of the word: "Do not trust in words, do not believe that politics merely mean the exercise of oratory faculties and some lobby combinations. Thus understood, politics are only fit for Parliamentary comedies; but, allow me to tell you that there is no science or art (and politics are both) which demands more labour, more knowledge, more continuous and persistent efforts. Is it not the duty of a political man to inquire into everything, to be ready for everything? Can he remain indifferent before any progress, any reform, in any branch of human activity? . . . The Science of Politics will be of no use until it becomes recognised that it requires the assistance of all other sciences, and that it can be but the fruit and the result of immense labour and immense application."

Finally, in Paris (eighth *arrondissement*), on the 15th February, opposing at the same time the candidatures of the Duc Decazes and of M. Raoul Duval, and that same evening, at Belleville, where he himself was standing, Gambetta gave the large outlines of his governmental method, as well as of his doctrine. He evidently felt that he and his friends were very near to power. The Chamber for him meant a portfolio.

Gambetta was not a mere Parliamentarian. He was, like M. Thiers, in an exceptional situation; he had been a leader. He knew himself capable and justly desirous of seizing the reins if the country offered them by giving a majority to his ideas and programme. These dispositions met with prejudices from the Right, and even

with a latent opposition on the part of a group of Republicans who had not ridden clear of the mud cast by polemics over Gambetta's noble personality. With a fine frankness, he attempted to persuade men of good faith. He put the real problem, the problem of immediate government by a Republican majority, if the future Assembly should be led by one.

"When the Republic was on the eve of becoming the Government of France, politics concerned not merely one group, but the whole country. . . . Now that we have crossed the bridge, we shall find ourselves faced with difficulties of every kind: political, administrative, financial, economic, military, educational, fiscal. . . . Victors in the electoral joust, holding a majority in both Assemblies, *we shall be asked, and rightly* so, for a proof that we understand business, *that we are able to govern.*"

Then followed a "Discourse on Method": "Then shall we have to keep watch over ourselves, to rule ourselves, and to take no step without being sure of our ground, and without having secured a possible line of retreat. . . . That policy, a policy of results, is the only one which really conforms to the interests of Democracy. . . . What I want is not a collection of decrees inserted in the *Moniteur* and torn up on the next day by reactionaries. . . . I want you to state clearly with what we are to begin, with what to continue. . . . I belong to a school . . . which takes into consideration surroundings, tendencies, prejudices, and hostility even, for everything must be taken into account: paradoxes and sophistries weigh as much as truth and generalisation on the conduct of mankind." Was it possible to show more consideration? And now comes the last word, that which was to break down the last resistance: "When has it ever been said that every problem was to be approached at

once, that one man, one generation could tackle them all! Politics never are and never can be the same. And I say that it is well to modify our political conduct according to the very changes which have taken place and which do not cease to occur throughout the universe." This was an advance to the Marshal, within the bounds of dignity and possibility. Would this grave step be understood?

Gambetta's scientifically measured words, with their tolerant and exclusively political character, still acted on the masses, but were already accepted less enthusiastically by the Republican leaders. His authority was already opposed, though still indispensable.

M. Naquet and Gambetta.

Beyond the necessities of the hour, some bold and adventurous minds hailed another future. M. Naquet, a candidate at Apt (Vaucluse), had already begun in 1875, through the newspaper *Évènement*, a strong campaign against the too influential leader of the Lefts. At a public meeting in Marseilles, he said: "Duped in February and in July, the Left must renounce its policy of concessions. I voted for the Constitution and I regret it, but the affirmations of the negotiators of the Left, which I was bound to believe, did not allow me to judge otherwise; we have now a Monarchy without a Monarch, or rather with an elected Monarch, not hereditary, it is true, but re-eligible. Gambetta and his friends are in the constitutional rut; let them remain there since they think it useful; let them represent the Conservative Republican element. But, beyond them, a Democratic advance guard must be constituted. At the next elections, Gambetta's name must be left to less advanced departments. If Lyons, Paris, Marseilles, were to *plébiscite* on his head, that would be giving him the direction of the most advanced Radical opinion, approving his policy

of passive concessions. The South is not of that opinion. That is why we must loudly profess our uncompromising Progressist faith."

The principal points in M. Naquet's programme were: "Revision; one Chamber, free to dismiss the Executive at its pleasure; direct appeal to the People as in 1793; absolute liberty of the Press; free meetings; freedom of association; separation of the Church from the State; universal and compulsory military service.

In economic questions: purchase by the State of the Bank, railways and mines; a progressive taxation of capital or income; divorce, woman civilly equal to man; similar education for both sexes. M. Naquet further added to this programme: "amnesty; elected tribunals; the suppression of permanent armies, replaced by the whole armed nation; the return to Paris of the Government."

This was the extreme programme, the *intransigeant* programme. It was supported by an appreciable number of candidates. M. Madier de Montjau, who was standing for the Drôme, wrote a letter of acquiescence to M. Naquet, refusing to sacrifice everything to *conciliation*, "in view of concessions which might never come."

M. Louis Blanc.

In Paris, M. Louis Blanc was standing for the fifth and thirteenth *arrondissements*. He had been solicited in various directions. But he was in bad health and had been unable to join in the electoral campaign. His address was relatively moderate: "There is but one Sovereign, the nation. The Republic alone is compatible with the Sovereignty of the People. The object of the Republic is the increased welfare of all. The subordination of the Executive power to the Legislative is a consequence of the Sovereignty of the

People. Wherever the State, instead of ruling the Church, is ruled by it, the most fertile freedom, that of the human mind, is in danger. Clericalism is the real social peril."

These principles being laid down, M. Louis Blanc appeals to prudence and moderation, "to the union of all Republican forces, which alone are truly Conservative."

M. Ch. Floquet. M. Charles Floquet, formerly Chairman of the Paris Municipal Council, was a candidate for the twelfth *arrondissement*, where he was popular. This candidature had a specially municipal character; certain traces of the Commune ideas lingered in the Municipal Council, which had opened against the State a campaign more noisy than effective. At the Senatorial elections, M. Floquet had expressed his political views as follows: "It is for you to judge whether the Paris Municipal Council has done its duty, and whether the libelled names of Thulié, of Clemenceau, and my own do not deserve some reparation. . . . I am a resolute, Radical, Republican. I accept the whole programme, in all its parts. As to the amnesty, I accept it and demand it with all my heart."

M. Clemenceau. M. Georges Clemenceau, Chairman of the Municipal Council, was a candidate for the eighteenth *arrondissement*. His programme was that of the Extreme Left. From the municipal point of view, he demanded "the election of Mayors by the Municipal Councils, the enfranchisement of the *commune*." He had organised many public meetings, and rained the barbed arrows of his eloquence over his adversaries, sometimes over his allies. "The Conservative Republicans ask a minimum from the Republic, we demand a maximum. We, Radical Republicans, we want the Republic for its natural consequences: the great and fertile social reforms which it entails. . . ."

The Radical Programme.

The programme of the Radicals had been drawn up by M. Allain-Targé, a Candidate for the fourteenth *arrondissement* against the ex-General of the Commune, Cremer. "Amnesty, the suppression of martial law, freedom of meeting and association, free, compulsory and secular elementary education, defence of civil society against the clerical invasion, compulsory military service for all, election of the Mayors by Municipal Councils, revision of the fiscal system, separation of the Church from the State."

This programme, with very slight variations, was adopted by M. Henri Brisson, who called it the "Programme of the Radical Republic," and who specially emphasised the famous formula, "defence of civil society against the clerical invasion"; by M. Barodet, a Candidate in the fourth *arrondissement* against M. Vautrain, a Moderate; by M. Eugène Spuller, a Candidate in the third *arrondissement;* and M. Émile Deschanel, a Candidate at Courbevoie (Seine).

The Republican party included many men destined to become leaders of the majority and of the country. Here are the future Presidents of the Republic, their special characteristics already visible at that time when their names became finally inscribed or made their first appearance in history:

M. Jules Grévy.

M. Jules Grévy was an old stager. He stood for Dôle in the Jura. "I am what I have always been; a man of order, of liberty and of progress; a Republican, convinced by the history of the last eighty years, and by the Democratic state of French society, that the Republic is now the necessary Government of our country and of our times. . . . This Government has for the last five years repaired our disasters. What other would have assumed the task in 1871?"

M. Sadi Carnot. M. Sadi Carnot was a Candidate in the Côte d'Or, where the name of Carnot represented Republican traditions. He expressed himself thus: "The Republic alone can pacify our old dissensions; it alone is not a party Government. . . . It will gather to itself all men of good-will, and an era of calm, order and liberty will enable France to resume her place in the world. . . ."

M. Casimir-Perier. M. Casimir-Perier, also the heir of a political dynasty, was a Candidate in the Aube, at Nogent-sur-Seine. His origin was not purely Republican. Yet he could call upon the name of his father as one of the founders of the *régime:* "As for me—since it is my duty as a Candidate to speak of myself—since I attained man's estate, towards the end of the Empire, I have never wished but for one Government: the Republic. . . . I shall remain at my post and defend the Republic."

M. Félix Faure. M. Félix Faure was a new comer. He was standing at Le Havre against M. Lecesne. He was unsuccessful.

M. Émile Loubet. In the Drôme, at Montélimar, M. Émile Loubet was unopposed. He demanded "the restitution of all political freedom, the right for the *communes* to elect their Mayor"; he promised to "defend civil society and the laws which have constituted it since 1789 against encroachment, invasion, or ruling tendencies of the clerical power;" amnesty save in favour of common criminals; his seat would be in the Moderate Left, next to M. Jules Grévy.

M. Fallières. Lastly, M. Armand Fallières was a Candidate at Nérac, against a Bonapartist: "He must indeed be blind who does not see that, after so many shocks and misfortunes, France requires rest, quiet, security for the morrow, and that, in a country of Universal Suffrage, the Republican form of Government

alone can secure these benefits. . . . Let us leave Experience and Time to prepare the necessary improvements. . . . Marshal MacMahon, who is invested with the highest position under the Republic, will, we can depend upon it, loyally apply the institutions entrusted to him and guaranteed to us by his word of honour as a gentleman and a soldier."

Let us now glance at the possible Ministers:

M. Jules Ferry.

M. Jules Ferry, in the Vosges (Saint-Dié), after recalling his own attitude before the National Assembly, said: "I shall bring to the coming Legislature the same spirit of practical wisdom and justice. . . . Let the enemies of our institutions take Revision for their flag. France demands a Liberal policy." At a public meeting, M. Jules Ferry said: "The moment has not come to renounce a policy of compromise. Let us treat questions one after another, in a practical way. Let us acclimatise the Republic."

M. Constans.

M. Constans, who was standing at Toulouse, said: "The Republican party is no longer an Opposition party, it is henceforth a Government party. . . ." And again: "I shall follow Gambetta, but never go further. . . ."

M. Méline.

M. Jules Méline was a Candidate at Remiremont (Vosges). He had no competitor. M. Thiers was his leader. "M. Thiers has set himself the task of accustoming men's minds to a change in the form of Government. . . . No doubt, the Republican party must always keep in view the programme of which he pursues the realisation. But, in order to reach it, he must be content to give it time; it is the quickest way after all."

Next to Gambetta's most moderate friends came the old leaders of the Left Centre, representing the *bourgeoisie* and already less numerous, decimated by age and by the Senatorial elections.

M. Christophle. M. Christophle (Orne) urged Republicans to moderation and called upon "the respected name of Marshal MacMahon."

M. Léon Renault. M. Léon Renault had left the Prefecture of Police in order to stand in Seine-et-Oise (Corbeil) as a clearly Constitutional Candidate. A distinguished speaker, witty and refined, he intended to play a part. "Solely anxious for the good and honour of our country," said he, "I have accepted and I shall support without an after-thought, the Republican institutions founded by the National Assembly. Entrusted as they are to the care of the illustrious Marshal, those institutions are reassuring to statesmen."

M. Léon Renault was a personal friend of the Duc Decazes: a very slight shade separated the former Prefect of Police from the Foreign Minister, who was standing in the eighth *arrondissement* as a "Constitutionalist." The Duc Decazes was opposed by M. Raoul Duval and by M. Chauffour, a Republican. At the second ballot, the Republican made way for M. Decazes, thus making a "bridge" for the final adhesion to the Republic of the friend of the Orleans Princes.

From the very first day, the subtle Duke foresaw and prepared the evolution which he was about to accomplish. "I voted for the Constitution, and I do not wish to seek in the right of Revision a weapon against it; . . . I will respect it and serve it loyally, without an after-thought."

M. Louis Passy, Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Finance under M. Léon Say, was another conquest of the "Conservative" Republic. "I wish to stand as a frankly Constitutional and Liberal Candidate. My former words" (this in answer to a question by Admiral La Roncière le Noury) "imply my frank adhesion to the Constitution of the 15th February, and my devotion to the pacific policy pursued by Marshal MacMahon."

Thus, from the Extreme Left to the palest Centre, the infinite shades of Republican opinion were in juxtaposition. The party was living and multiform, like the nation itself. However, at this moment of recent peril, a feeling of discipline remained; with few exceptions, men walked hand-in-hand towards one goal.

In the Right Opposition, the Republican principle itself was not absolutely rejected. How rare were the candidates who bravely unfurled the Monarchist flag! Save for a few Legitimists and the noisy section of militant Bonapartists, the real line was drawn on the religious question. Catholics, already aware that they would be a minority, were invoking Liberty. "The principle of the Republic having been legally established," said M. Keller, in the Haut-Rhin, "we must apply it honestly, but we must preserve it from anarchist and anti-religious passions which would prove fatal to it. . . . I am ready to defend Marshal MacMahon against Radicals and Bonapartists. . . . Let us defend religious liberties and those Conservative principles without which no Government can endure. . . ."

The Comte de Mun.

The real leader of the future Catholic Right party was the Comte de Mun, then a candidate at Pontivy in the Morbihan. In his electoral address he set the political question entirely on one side: "Convinced as I am that the Catholic faith is, in social as in political questions, the necessary basis of laws and institutions; that, alone, it can remedy Revolutionary evils and ensure the salvation of France, I am firmly resolved, on whatever ground God may call me to serve Him, to devote myself without reserve to the defence of those principles."

The Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Bisaccia.

The Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Bisaccia, who had, in June 1874, moved a resolution restoring the Monarchy, was a Candidate at Mamers,

in the Sarthe. He was an honest, sincere man. Yet, his electoral address went no farther than some generalities on Conservatism and the usual eulogium of Marshal MacMahon.

The Marquis de la Roche-jacquelein.

From the heart of the Vendée rose the melancholy and almost solitary appeal of the Marquis de la Rochejacquelein, a voice from another world, the Legitimist past, a page of almost forgotten History. "After five years of strife and labour, during which, in spite of many disappointments, we have succeeded in securing peace, in crushing triumphant insurrection, in consolidating order, re-establishing finance, and giving a more liberal scope to Education, I now come to tell you that I am ready to take up the burden of public life once more. . . . You know my Monarchical convictions, you know that I wish to 'conserve' all that you love: religion, family life, property. . . . If you will trust me again, I am ready, ready to defend these things with all my strength. . . ." *Vox clamantis in deserto.*

M. Raoul Duval.

The Bonapartist group was more sure of itself, more alert. The young leader of Neo-Bonapartism, whose vigorous energy had been so active during the last session of the National Assembly, M. Raoul Duval, remained in the breach. He had left the Seine-Inférieure, and was standing, at the same time, in Paris and at Louviers, in the Eure.

At the beginning of the campaign, he made no secret of his Bonapartist sentiments: "A partisan of National Sovereignty, and resolved to accept the decision of the People, whatever it may be, I have proposed and supported a direct appeal to the People as the surest and safest means of discovering its preference. . . ." His programme was as follows: "Obedience to Constitutional laws, respect for the powers conferred by those laws

upon Marshal MacMahon, the final choice of a government left to the People directly consulted." But when the second ballot came, he felt the need of modifying his position: he cleverly shifted a little and said, alluding to the result of the first ballot: "Almost everywhere, Moderate Republicans have succumbed, as well as the former governing party. It is therefore essential for the weal of France and for the endurance of Republican institutions that next Sunday's elections should bring into the composition of the Legislative Chamber elements of temperance and moderation."

The Corsican Elections.

Old Bonapartists showed none of this suppleness. A violent antagonism existed within the party between the rare friends of Prince Napoleon and the followers of the Empress Eugénie: there were now two Bonapartisms, one Red and Democratic, the other White and clerical. That quarrel was made public. M. Rouher, who already stood both for Riom and for Bastia, fought at Ajaccio against Prince Napoleon. The Prince Imperial supported him by a letter which was hard on his kinsman: "The Corsicans have a sentiment of duty and honour; they will render homage to both these virtues by electing a man who has never failed in either." In another letter, the Prince Imperial went still further: "Prince Napoleon is standing against my wish; he is supported by our enemies; I am obliged to treat him as such." Prince Napoleon retorted: "Inspired by the spirit of Napoleon I, I say to you: The form of government is not in question; it exists, I accept it frankly. . . . What I want is the organisation of our Democracy. . . . M. Rouher is standing against me. . . . My adversaries are ever reactionary—as for me, if your suffrages send me to the Assembly, I shall ever be a Democrat and a partisan of progress."

M. Rouher, M. Haentjens, M. Jolibois, consented to

try the new institutions; they also invoked the name of Marshal MacMahon, *Duc de Magenta*, whom they compromised a little. Their last word was always: Revision, and the Appeal to the People. "Universal Suffrage, the Appeal to the People," wrote M. Rouher, "are henceforth, in this democratic society, the only bases on which a stable, strong, and respected Government can stand. Some think that the people, if consulted, would confirm the Republic. I have an absolute confidence that the Empire would be re-established."

M. Paul de Cassagnac.

M. Paul de Cassagnac, more fanciful, but also more firmly Catholic, opened a larger field to his future furious opposition.

"My motto is in mourning, widowed for the Emperor. . . . But my war-cry remains: God and France. . . . Should we hinder Marshal MacMahon in the accomplishment of his providential mission? No, a thousand times no! . . . Electors, if you are Royalist, do not elect me. I respect Royalty, it is true, but I do not want it. If you are Republicans, do not elect me either, for I am the implacable foe of the Republic. . . . After the Marshal, if the French people will, I see but the popular Candidate, he who is now but the Prince Imperial, but whose name will be, by the national will, Napoleon IV."

In the "Conservative" party, M. Paul de Cassagnac was the only one who dared express himself with so much frankness; in general, attenuated words covered hidden or effaced convictions. The weakness of those men was a want of clearness and decision; they said *No* to everything, and that was their whole programme. Never did the French Tories more clearly show their powerlessness to foresee, to determine or to control the stream of popular opinion. Consideration for the world, their interests and acquired situations limited their views and their efforts; vain criticism, bitter invective or frivolous jokes fed their

oratory. A pale and feeble grimace, indeed, in answer to the anxious question of the people and of Universal Suffrage.

The first ballot took place on the 20th February, in perfect calm. Out of 533 seats, Republicans of all shades secured 300, 40 Left Centre, 180 Left and 80 Extreme Left, including about a dozen *intransigeants*. The Liberal Constitutionalists obtained 20 seats, the Right and Right Centre Monarchists 45, Pure Legitimists 20, and Bonapartists 50. A second ballot was necessary in 105 cases.

The Centres were crushed at the first bout by the advanced parties. Most of the Right leaders, notorieties in the former Assembly, were beaten, amongst others: M. de Bonald and the Duc Decazes in the Aveyron, MM. Target and Cornélis de Witt in the Calvados, Numa Baragnon in the Gard, de Carayon-Latour in the Gironde, de Cazenove de Pradines in Lot-et-Garonne, Amédée Lefèvre-Pontalis in Eure-et-Loir, Antonin Lefèvre-Pontalis in the Nord, Albert Desjardins in the Oise, Sens in the Pas-de-Calais, Dandelarre in the Haute Saône, d'Haussonville in Seine-et-Marne, Ernoul in the Haute Vienne, Ravinel in the Vosges, and Raudot in the Yonne. It was a disaster.

Defeat of M. Buffet.

The great event of the ballot was the quadruple defeat of M. Buffet in the Vosges, Meuse, Cher and Tarn-et-Garonne, and, on the other hand, the quadruple victory of Gambetta in Paris, Marseilles, Lille and Bordeaux. M. Thiers was elected by the ninth *arrondissement* (Paris), M. Léon Renault in Seine-et-Oise, M. Dufaure at La Rochelle. Most of the Parisian deputies, MM. Lockroy, Clemenceau, Raspail, belonged to extreme parties. M. Vautrain was beaten by M. Barodet in the eighth *arrondissement*, the Duc Decazes awaited a second ballot.

Among the new Republican deputies were: MM. Spuller, Liouville, Albert Joly, Devès, Antonin Proust, Allain-Targé, Menier, Jean Casimir-Perier, Émile Deschanel, Floquet, Raspail, Marcelin Pellet, Constans, Fallières, Martin-Feuillée, Cornil, etc. . . .

III

The Right routed.

The first effect upon the Right was that of a complete rout. But, almost at once, the idea occurred to profit by this marked movement of the Left. The *Bourse* fell. The 3% suddenly went down from 67·85 to 65·75, thus losing more than two points, and only regained its former position three months later. Under this feeling of panic, certain Right press-men advised Marshal MacMahon to attempt a *coup d'état* before the new Parliament was constituted.

It seems even that this suggestion actually occupied the mind of the exalted persons who surrounded the Marshal; though they were still in authority, everything seemed to fail them at once. The Marshal twisted his moustache, listening first to one and then to the other. "I did not fail to let him know my sentiments," writes M. de Meaux, who pronounced for resistance. "As I was leaving his study, I met the Duchess, looking sad and perplexed, and she questioned me. At first, the opinion I expressed seemed to please and surprise her. I took note of the words which she addressed to me on that occasion, as they seemed to me an accurate representation of the Marshal as I have often seen him in critical moments. 'Bring people to see my husband, men of good counsel. He is not accustomed to politics; he cannot guess at them, but, when things are pointed out to him, he is not blinded by personal interests;

he desires but what is right, and thus he sees but what is true, he rises above the fog.'"

This was an accurate and clear-sighted appreciation. The Marshal sought to "rise above the fog." All the leaders of the party met at the Presidency, in the Vicomte d'Harcourt's room. The Duc de Broglie had come from his Department.

At first, a conference took place apart from the Marshal. M. Buffet, supported by M. de Meaux, was all for immediate resistance. The Duc de Broglie held a contrary opinion. "To engage in a struggle without further delay would be to compromise the Marshal and the Senate, our last resources. It were better to leave to the Chamber time to betray itself, to lose credit through its own excesses." The majority of those who were present at this impromptu council leaned towards the opinion of the Duc de Broglie.

M. de Broglie and M. Buffet.

The Marshal wished to see the Duc de Broglie and M. Buffet alone. They went with him into his study. . . . The opinion of M. de Broglie prevailed. M. de Meaux was awaiting the Marshal's decision at the Ministry of the Interior, Place Beauvau, opposite the Élysée. M. Buffet came back in despair: "The Marshal, seeing his army defeated and discouraged, resigns himself to beat a first retreat. . . ." Nothing was left for M. Buffet but to retire. The Vicomte de Meaux followed him.

M. Buffet, beaten, had lost all authority, even with his party. Forsaken, rejected, unpopular, he held his head up in spite of all. M. de Meaux says that he never saw him flinch. "I thought of the righteous Roman of old:

'Justum et tenacem propositi virum

. . . . . .

Menta quatit solida.'"

A "consolation" candidature in the Gironde was

offered to the Vice-President of the Council. He declined the offer. "I am greatly touched," he wrote, "but there would be a lack of dignity on my part if I were to attempt a new candidature after so many successive failures. . . . I am told that the constituency is an excellent one; people do not realise what it would become if I were to accept this proposal. All the means of action of the Demagogue party would at once centre there, and the only result I should obtain would be the demoralisation of a constituency which is still Conservative at present. . . ."

He had felt no enthusiasm on reaching power, neither did he entertain any illusions at the time of his fall.

On the 24th February, a decree appeared in the *Officiel*, appointing M. Dufaure Vice-President of the Council, and giving him, provisionally, the post of Minister of the Interior. M. de Meaux "remained temporarily in charge of the affairs of his Department."

This measure was a very important one, marking as it did before Parliament had even met, the tendencies of the future Government. Though promptly taken, it had been discussed and thought out. The perspicacity of the Duc de Broglie had seen the advantage to be secured by at once blocking the path of Gambetta with a series of intermediary Cabinets. M. Buffet, a man of another nature, of another race, would never have imagined these political subtleties which consisted in dividing in order to continue to reign.

As for M. Dufaure, he accepted in all good faith, quietly confident, like all his party, that "France was of the Left Centre."

Gambetta's Speech in Lyons.

Gambetta saw the danger. Between the first and the second ballots, he seized the first opportunity which offered. He delivered at Lyons a speech which was aimed at the Marshal,

passing over the heads of his popular audience. It was the speech of a Statesman, of a Minister.

In it, the principle of the new Government, resting both on the new Chamber and on the Marshal's personality, was defined in sharp outlines.

Gambetta considered that it was well to be anti-clerical with the Parliament and prudent with the President; he supported his arguments by considerations of foreign politics, intended to weigh with the Élysée: "The chief characteristic of the elections is the repudiation of the clerical spirit, at home and abroad. A clerical policy inspired all the actions of the majority of the National Assembly. The system threatened all public liberty and silently smothered it under a leaden weight. . . . Well, France rose up in fear, fear of the old *régime*, of the theocratic spirit. We must break, once for all, with a doctrine which will never be given its share. . . . This recrudescence of the Ultramontane spirit might one day become the starting-point of a foreign diplomacy . . . of which the object would be to divide the nations into two camps, one holding with the Vatican, and the other with modern freedom. . . . We should have nothing to do with such a policy. . . . Let us avoid the spirit of exaggerated propaganda and excessive proselytism. Let us do our work ourselves, for ourselves, with our fellow-citizens. We have nothing to expect from the spirit of cosmopolitanism and ultra-proselytism: that is the policy of the Second Empire, which led us to our present unfortunate external situation. The French Republic should be considered not only by the nations but by the Governments of Europe as a guarantee of general peace and welfare."

The speaker then turned to home questions, directly addressing the Élysée. "At home, France wished to secure a majority which should not be a majority of

systematic opposition, but a governing majority. . . . He who is at the head of the State, the first Magistrate of the Republic, the President of the Republic, may rest assured that Republicans will not question, weaken, diminish or seek to alter the powers which he owes to the fundamental compact itself. . . . We want the Constitution, the whole Constitution. . . . It is our guarantee, our strength, *the alliance compact*, the sign of public order between Republicans *and inevitably Liberal parties.* Since we are the strongest, we should be moderate. . . . Our policy should be the same as that which made the Constitution. We must not be hard upon the Liberals, upon those who obstinately adhered to the policy of the ruling classes. If they come to us, we must welcome them, we must open our ranks before them, and say to them, 'That is well! Come and exert the legitimate influence which belongs to you. We are not a closed Republic . . . etc.'"

Even the declared enemies of the *régime* were called upon by Gambetta in this remarkable effort: "Whilst fighting the adversary, struggling to conquer our rightful position, we may give way to passion, to the suggestion of our hearts, our temperaments; but, as soon as we have won, the position becomes quite different; then must we be doubly watchful, for, as one of the Ancients said: 'One thing is more difficult to bear than adversity, and that is Good Fortune.'" And Gambetta concluded:

"When we have established the consistency and firm union of the Republican party, when we have shown to all that our wisdom is not one day's wisdom but a firm design that nothing can shake, then will the French Republic be not only founded in the country, but ineradicably rooted in the world's sympathy."

Is it not a remarkable thing that, at the same moment, and surely without prearrangement, two such

authorised statesmen as Gambetta and the Duc de Broglie should each be preaching moderation, the one to the Marshal and the other to Universal Suffrage?

If Gambetta had gone one step further, he would have been called a traitor. Already men accused him.

This astonishing Lyons speech was so singularly bold that it was scarcely understood. The hand which was held out fell back to his side. Political parties are like battalions on the march, retarded by laggards who set the pace. Thus is political life a complication of inevitable blunders, during which what seems like progress often merely means marking time in the mud. The ideal goal is so far, obstacles so near! Life wears itself away against them, and the man who breaks them dies before he has had time to recover his breath.

Second Ballots.

The second ballot had been fixed for the 5th March. Public feeling had changed in the interval between the two ballots. The Right now knew how fatal had been the divisions among the Conservative parties.

Bonapartism, which had begun by asserting its isolation—"each for himself," M. Rouher had said—now seemed inclined to enter into combinations. The Right Centre, less proud, consented to the organisation of a Liberal Republic; this was thought better than "cutting the painter." "There are certain Moderate Republicans," sweetly wrote the *Journal de Paris*, "whom we look upon as more Conservative than certain Bonapartists."

In Paris, M. Chauffour retired in favour of the Duc Decazes, and M. Langlois in favour of M. Frébault, a Radical, in order to bar the road before MM. Raoul Duval and Bartholoni.

The Extreme Left itself became less uncompromising,

more accommodating. A retrograde movement was felt throughout the country in the face of the results of the first ballot. Also, M. Buffet's resignation had abated party virulence; it was feared, even among advanced Republicans, that victory might be compromised. Reaction was detested, but Anarchy was not less to be avoided.

The presence of M. Dufaure seemed a guarantee; the Cabinet was consolidated by the general inclination toward the Centres.

Such was in fact the result of the second ballot. Out of 105 seats which had remained, 56 were secured by Moderate Republicans, 4 by Constitutionalists, 12 by Monarchists of the Right and Right Centre, 7 by Pure Legitimists, and 26 by Bonapartists: in all, 49 "Conservatives" against 56 Republicans. The victory of the first ballot was not confirmed.

A Bonapartist who carefully watched the pendulum of public opinion thus described the general feeling in Paris: "The result of the elections has been the continuation of terror. Everybody is anxious, in different ways: the greater number fear the triumph of the Radicals and subsequent violence; M. Gambetta fears his own followers, who wish to push him further than he thinks it wise to go; the Radicals are embarrassed by their victory and do not know how to use it; the Government is puzzled by having to form a Cabinet. M. Thiers himself is beginning to feel that he may be unable to stem the torrent. M. X. Marmier was saying to him the other day, in a drawing-room: 'You will have to free the territory for the second time.' He meant from the Radicals. M. Thiers became very serious and answered: 'You are joking, but it is much more difficult than you think.' He too is anxious."[1]

[1] Fidus, *Journal de dix ans*, vol. iv., p. 18.

Composition of the Chamber of Deputies.

Altogether, the Chamber of Deputies numbered approximately—without taking account of multiple elections—340 Republicans, of whom 98 belonged to the Extreme Left, 194 to the Left, and 48 to the Left Centre; also 22 Constitutionalists. Thus one very compact group, that of the Left, reached almost 200; this party supported Gambetta, but the ardour of the Extreme Left and the "particularism" of the Left Centre soon afterwards hindered his young authority.

The Right minorities were composed of 55 Deputies of the old Rights and Right Centre, 25 Pure Legitimists, and 75 Bonapartists. Here again the situation was complex and confused, with increasing dissensions. Altogether, it was a complete upheaval of the previous *régime;* the National Assembly was dead and buried.

Opening Ceremony.

A solemn ceremony consecrated the change of *régime.* On Wednesday, the 8th March, 1876, the transfer of powers took place. The existing *bureau* of the National Assembly and the Permanent Committee had been called for two o'clock. The Chamber of Deputies was to meet at one o'clock, and the Senate at half-past two.

At half-past one, the Deputies took their seats under the presidency of the oldest member, M. Raspail. The six youngest, MM. Roy de Loulay, Louis Janvier de la Motte, Sarlande, René Eschassériaux, Marcelin Pellet and Jean Casimir-Perier acted as provisional secretaries.

The sitting was immediately suspended in order to allow the *bureau* to be present at the procedure of the transfer of powers.

The members of the *bureau* and of the permanent Committee sat in the "Salon d'Hercule," presided over by the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier. M. Martel, President

of the Pardons Committee, handed in his powers, which expired at the same time as those of the Assembly. This Committee had examined 8,179 cases, and pronounced 3,141 pardons or attenuations of penalties.

The Chairman, M. d'Audiffret-Pasquier, directed that the provisional *bureaux* of both Chambers be introduced. He spoke briefly, applauded by all: "France, having been freely consulted, has given a startling sanction to the decisions of the Assemblée Nationale. . . . The Republican Constitution of the 25th February is a work of conciliation and pacification. It is for you, Gentlemen, to continue it, to defend it. Gathered around Marshal MacMahon, you will give our country a peaceful and orderly Government. . . . Like ourselves, you will wish to hand it back to your successors pacified, prosperous and free. . . ."

This was the voice of tradition and also of progress.

An aged man, M. Gaulthier de Rumilly, President of the provisional *bureau* of the Senate, spoke in his turn: "The Senate will be the faithful guardian of the Constitution. The government of Marshal MacMahon, Constitutional President of the legally organised Republic, rests on the most solid basis: the sanction of the country which demands Order, Freedom and Peace. It is through a close union between the public powers, the Senate, the Chamber and the Government, that France will enjoy those great benefits."

Now spoke M. Dufaure, the pilot-elect of future voyages; all eyes were turned towards him, he was the organ of the changing State: "We, my colleagues and myself, have been delegated by the President of the Republic to receive from your hands the Executive power with its duties and its prerogatives, such as it is conferred upon him by the Constitution of the 25th February. Our mission is to declare unto you that he

feels confident that he will never exert this power otherwise than in conformity with the laws and for the honour and interest of our great and beloved country."

The Chairman then declared that, the provisional *bureaux* of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies being constituted, the powers of the National Assembly had now expired.

The Senate met at a quarter to three. The oldest member, M. Gaulthier de Rumilly, delivered an address, declaring that "France has spoken; the Republic is founded." The Senate adopted the standing orders of the National Assembly, elected nine *bureaux* and adjourned its next sitting to the next day at four o'clock.

In the meanwhile, the Chamber met about half-past two, its oldest member, M. Raspail, taking the chair. That singular demagogue, an original scientist and popular philosopher and chemist, a survivor of 1848, hailed the "new era." His voice was an echo of the past; he spoke of the future, but revived old irritations: "Let us forget our internecine calamities; let us forget all our discords, let us wipe out all traces of them. Let us repair our blunders instead of adding to their number. It is at this cost that Confidence will fertilise Science, Industry, Moralisation and Liberty, those great active forces of the Republic."

Election of Officers.

The Chamber, adopting until further notice the regulations of the National Assembly, proceeded to the election of the *bureau*. M. Jules Grévy was provisionally elected President, and M. Rameau Vice-President.

The Chamber agreed to divide into eleven *bureaux*. The next sitting was to take place on the following day, at half-past three o'clock.

The new order had begun.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST DUFAURE CABINET

I. First session.—The Majority.—M. Dufaure, his character and situation.—Constitution of the Dufaure Cabinet.—The Ministerial Address.—Divisions in the Majority.—Tactics of the Extreme Left.—Gambetta Chairman of the Finance Committee.—First Republican Laws.

II. Administrative changes.—Death of M. Ricard; M. de Marcère succeeds him.—Debate on the amnesty.—Supplementary elections.—The right of revision discussed by the Senate.—Modification by the Chamber of the Higher Education Law.—M. Buffet is made a Life-Senator.

III. Party excitement.—The Mayors' Law voted by the Chamber.—Jules Ferry and Gambetta disagree.—Rejection by the Senate of the amended Education Bill.—Conflict between the two Chambers.—The 1877 Budget.—General de Cissey resigns and is succeeded by General Berthaut.—End of the ordinary Session.—Holidays.—Bye-Elections.—Marshal MacMahon at the Army Manœuvres.

IV. The Vatican incident.—France and Italy.—Political speeches.—The Paris Labour Congress.—The extraordinary session of 1876.—Cessation of prosecutions subsequent to the Commune.—Fiscal reform.—The Budget.—M. Chesnelong becomes a Life-Senator.—The Senate rejects the Bill on the Commune prosecutions.—Fall of the Dufaure Ministry.

I

MATERIAL conditions often explain moral dispositions. Before the 8th March, 1876, France was governed by the National Assembly seated in the Palace of Kings at Versailles; the President and Ministers seemed mere delegates.

From March 1876, the Parliamentary *régime* was inaugurated; two Chambers became co-existent; the Executive assumed a Constitutional authority.

The two Chambers sat at Versailles: the Senate, in

the Opera Hall, where the National Assembly had held its meetings; the Chamber of Deputies, in a hall built on purpose in the Southern Court.

The magic of old associations fell upon the new *régime*, beginning its young life in long-accustomed surroundings; it was impossible not to continue certain traditions, certain habits, and even certain trains of thought.

Versailles. At Versailles, the Senate was at home. Most of the Senators had belonged to the National Assembly. At the very first sitting, acquaintances hailed each other across the benches. Friends and adversaries shook hands. Groups gathered once more to resume familiar conversations or interrupted confidences. A long contact had rounded off all angles; all these men together became as one body. They took up again, almost unconsciously, the mechanical routine of former times; they came and went from the Palace to the railway station according to the usual time-table, lighting a cigar or a cigarette at the same tobacconist's. Their private life was arranged to suit the necessary rites of their public life. The quiet *boulevards* saw without surprise the daily procession of elderly men wending their way to the Palace.

At the sittings, the herd, of its own accord, fell in with the regulations. They knew beforehand what was going to be said, their opinion was formed; they had proved the vanity of speeches and were familiar with all the oratorical "effects" of their ordinary speakers. The Senate was a survival of the National Assembly . . . and that was precisely the result that had been desired by the authors of the Constitution.

The Chamber of Deputies was quite different: composed for the most part of men young, impatient, thrilled by the recent tumults of electoral agitations. They had rushed up from their provinces to take

Paris by storm, and they found themselves billeted at Versailles.

At first, the short journey, in those early spring days, seemed like a pleasant outing. But irritation soon followed. That monotonous and enervating life, those regular, daily walks, the rectilinear gardens with their solemn avenues, everything was deadly dull. The return to Paris in the evening was lugubrious, the departure in the morning more lugubrious still. The Senate was too near; the Chamber of Deputies seemed to feel its suspicious supervision, ready to remonstrate at the least mistake. The young Chamber, crowned yesterday and hailed by Universal Suffrage, now found itself under the ferule of an aged and unsympathetic school-master, in a sumptuous and morose building!

The Élysée Palace.

The President of the Republic, officially supposed to reside in Versailles, was, in fact, in Paris, at the Élysée Palace. A Marshal of France, Duke of Magenta, a survivor both of the July Monarchy and of the Second Empire, a relation, connection or friend of all the French noble families, installed three years before by the National Assembly, sanctioned anew by the Legislative and Senatorial elections—in which his name was so frequently used—invested by the Constitution both with the "incommutable" Septennate and with the right of revision, Marshal MacMahon himself belonged to another epoch.

He also belonged to another world. "The Élysée seemed, with regard to the Republic, like a hostile camp. Only a very few members of the Left ever went there, and, if they did, the prevailing atmosphere was not calculated to make them feel at their ease. The highest Parisian Society, that of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, surrounded Madame la Maréchale, which was quite natural and unobjectionable. But "that brilliant

circle was not merely attracted by former relations; it showed with some affectation that it considered itself at home and that others were intruders, more or less. I think that the host and hostess would have wished it otherwise. But they could not help themselves."[1]

The Élysée represented all that was left in France of the Monarchical spirit. It was still a Court. The President himself, with his frank, easy, cordial manners, was a survival: he actually reigned over Paris, not only over the Paris of elections, but over the cosmopolitan capital, the city of luxury, tasteful elegance and festive worldliness.

M. Dufaure, with his 1830 frock-coat, eloquence and Gallicanism, went backwards and forwards between the President and the Parliament, between the Court at the Élysée and the Democrats at Versailles. He had to progress along the tight-rope of that singular Parliamentarism, drawn on one side by Universal Suffrage and on the other by the tradition to which he himself belonged. And that prodigious feat of equilibrium was to be accomplished above a yawning abyss and amidst the clamour of passionate crowds.

Gambetta and the Majority.

Even before the whole of the Chamber was elected, in the interval between the two ballots, Gambetta, divining that obstacles were being prepared against the future majority, had pronounced at Lyons that masterly speech which contained at the same time a precaution, an offer and a warning.

He thought himself master of the situation. But in this he was mistaken. His authority was undermined even before it had been sanctioned. The Élysée and the Rights, M. Thiers and the Left Centre, M. Grévy and the Moderate Lefts, M. Madier de Montjau and

[1] De Marcère, 16th May, p. 25.

the Advanced Lefts were so many rival forces, which he had to take into account. Traps were laid in his path.

The first of them had been the constitution of the Cabinet.

Yet it seemed the most natural thing in the world. On M. Buffet's retirement, his place was given to M. Dufaure, whose Republican fidelity and Liberal authority had mapped out and defended the frontier line which his adversaries had been unable to pass. M. Dufaure had been in the thick of the fight, he was now to be honoured.

Besides his really superior Parliamentary qualities, M. Dufaure had one incomparable merit: he was reassuring—reassuring for the Marshal, reassuring also for the timorous portion of the *bourgeoisie*, which was now turning, not without regret, from its former sympathies and tremblingly advancing towards new ideas. M. Dufaure, escorted by M. Léon Say, represented the old ruling classes and the great banking houses, watching over the steps of the young Republic, strict though indispensable tutors.

M. Dufaure.

M. Dufaure, born in 1798, was then seventy-eight years old. If this man, amongst all the vicissitudes of an agitated period, had maintained himself on a level which enabled him to be useful though not indispensable, and respected though not popular, he owed it to his great moral worth, his rare talent and his perfect integrity. A *bourgeois* and a lawyer from head to foot, with his ungainly figure, thin legs, smooth hair, bushy eyebrows, square jaw, parchment skin, clean-shaven face, and nasal voice, he might have been taken for a comic actor, if his vigorous soul had not revealed itself in his walk and carriage, which were those of a strong and formidable fighter. He had a quiet strength in his

eloquence, and an intensity of action which came from his robust mind; withal, a latent irony, a tone in which the Gaul could be felt: a *bourgeois*, but what a *bourgeois!*

His oratory is excellently described by one who was his colleague and friend. "In him, thought, language, gesture and voice united as in an embrace, in a powerful action which nothing could resist. His words were accurate, the sense precise, the style strong and sound, with no ornament but its incomparable lucidity. Then, now and again, in a sudden relaxation of the vice which tightly held the whole speech, a motion which became almost violent; an emotional phrase, which trembled on his thick lips and shook his great hairy hands; a short, sharp, terrible dart, aimed straight at the heart, which remained in the wound." M. Dufaure was a master of realistic eloquence.

He was born in that good land of Saintonge, which has been the birthplace of many well-balanced natures. Like de Sèze, Martignac and Laîné, he had been one of the glories of the Bordeaux Bar, an illustrious origin which hampered his whole life. A Liberal under Louis Philippe and the Prince-President, an adversary of the Second Empire, a friend of M. Thiers—though quite able to measure the little great man at his right estimate—a defender of Montalembert and Mgr. Dupanloup before the Imperial tribunals; a sincere believer, an enthusiastic advocate, a Member of the Académie Française, he had always remained in moderate and temperate regions. But he had ever shown himself firm and courageous in his opinions, an excellent and eminent member of his own moderate group. He refused to adhere to the Liberal Empire, as later on to the 24th May. Capable of many words when necessary, he was equally ready with an eloquent pause. A hard-working, valuable, and redoubtable Parliamentary man.

M. Dufaure was the best Minister that the middle-class could provide; but he was nothing more than that: "a secondary man," as he called himself on his death-bed, with a noble modesty.

What a contrast between this prophet of the past, thrilled by memories of 1793, and the representatives of a young Democracy, intoxicated with thoughts of the future. And yet it was M. Dufaure to whom the Élysée, between the two ballots, had confided the rudder.

There was an after-thought behind this decision which was entirely unknown to M. Dufaure and which rested on an axiom of practical wisdom, namely, that transitions must be brought about with care. In fact, the intention was to humour the will of the country, and, as suggested by the Duc de Broglie, to await the first blunders of the Assembly.

It is difficult to know whether the Élysée considered the idea of calling on the most important leader of the future majority, M. Gambetta. Some attempts took place: Gambetta gave a lunch to some familiar friends of the Presidency. "M. Duclerc tried to bring Gambetta and me together," said the Marshal, "at the end of the year 1876; he suggested an interview, and, in order to avoid gossip, I was to meet him in the Bois de Boulogne, as if by accident. But I refused this, as I also refused another interview. . . ."[1]

Perhaps the Élysée was hampered, not only by old prejudices, but by the necessity of a preliminary conversation with M. Thiers. The Marshal was also heard to say: "I could not appoint M. Thiers as a Minister, I could only retire in his favour." However this may have been, nothing of it transpired, and the course which was adopted proves that the counsels of the Duc de Broglie were punctiliously followed.

[1] Michel, *Léon Say*, p. 296.

There was every advantage in confronting the Chamber and the country with an accomplished fact. The President of the Republic therefore asked M. Dufaure to constitute the new Cabinet. A remarkable incident immediately revealed the tendencies of the Élysée. M. Dufaure's first thought had been to entrust the portfolio of the Interior to M. Casimir-Perier. Another name had even been pronounced which was not agreeable to the Marshal, that of M. Jules Simon. This would have been a Left Cabinet rather than a Left Centre one: a distinct step towards the probable axis of the majority. But M. Casimir-Perier having stated his resolve not to govern with M. Buffet's *personnel*, everything came to a sudden stop, and M. Dufaure offered the portfolio to M. Ricard.

The latter had played a part in the vote of the Constitution; he was a good-hearted and talented man, but still comparatively unknown, and of very moderate opinions: now, the Cabinet, with MM. Dufaure and Léon Say, was Left Centre only. M. Ricard had just been beaten by a Bonapartist at Niort. The choice was therefore not an obvious one, and, in spite of the real appreciation which surrounded M. Ricard, the surprise of the Left groups almost reached discontent. "This is not a majority Cabinet," wrote the *République Française*, "it is a *coterie* Cabinet."

Composition of the Dufaure Cabinet.

The Ministry, constituted by a series of decrees published in the *Journal Officiel* of the 9th, was composed as follows:—

President of the Council, Minister of Justice and Public Worship	M. DUFAURE.
Minister of the Interior.	M. RICARD.
„ „ *Foreign Affairs*	DUC DECAZES.

Minister of Education .	. M. WADDINGTON.
,, ,, *Finance* .	. M. LÉON SAY.
,, ,, *Public Works*	. M. CHRISTOPHLE.
,, ,, *Commerce* .	. M. TEISSERENC DE BORT.
,, ,, *War* . .	. GENERAL DE CISSEY.
,, ,, *Navy and Colonies*	ADMIRAL FOURICHON.

M. de Marcère succeeded M. Desjardins as Under-Secretary of State for the Interior. M. Louis Passy remained in the Finance Department.

M. Dufaure took the title of President of the Council, thus asserting the advent of the new *régime*. The Duc Decazes and General de Cissey kept their posts by the express desire of Marshal MacMahon. Little was generally known of the dissensions which had taken place in the last Cabinet between M. Buffet and the Duc Decazes. The latter was the last representative of the 24th May policy; M. Thiers told everybody that "the maintenance at the Foreign Office of the Duc Decazes was a scandal."

Everything was settled when the Chambers met on the 8th March at Versailles. The persons chosen were, on the whole, above immediate criticism. All the Lefts respected the name of M. Dufaure. There was nothing to do but to await the acts and declarations of the Cabinet. The hasty choice of Ministers was a first disappointment; it sowed germs of discord, and placed the Left majority in a false position.

Between the 9th and the 13th March, both Chambers went through the initial formalities. The *bureaux* were elected. At the Senate, the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier was elected President, with MM. Martel, Duclerc, Audren de Kerdrel, and General de Ladmirault as Vice-Presidents. At the Chamber, M. Jules Grévy was elected President by 462 votes out of 468. The Vice-Presidents were:

MM. de Durfort de Civrac, Bethmont, Rameau and Lepère; the quæstors: MM. Gailly, Denfert-Rochereau and Faye; and the Secretaries: MM. Lamy, Chiris, Sadi-Carnot, Savary, Rouvier, Prince de Léon, Clemenceau and the Duc d'Harcourt: the battalion of the future.

M. Thiers, elected Senator at Belfort, and Deputy in the ninth *arrondissement* of Paris, chose to represent Paris.

The Presidents' addresses were brief. The Ministerial declaration was awaited with impatience. It was read on the 14th March at the Senate by Senator Dufaure, Keeper of the Seals; at the Chamber by the Duc Decazes, Foreign Minister and Deputy.

It was a conscientious and replete statement, a programme of Parliamentary work, a table of Constitutional and Legislative matters; a document hardly calculated to heat an already cold audience.

The first sentence that the veteran Dufaure uttered, in nasal accents, was intended to please the Élysée but might irritate the Chamber: "Chosen as we are by the President of the Republic to exert in his name the powers conferred upon him by the Constitution, we have awaited your organisation," etc. . . . This was a loud assertion of the independent authority of the Executive power. But it was allowed to pass.

The long paper was seasoned with Republican declarations, counterbalanced by the proclamation of the "holy laws of religion, ethics and family life," "property respected and inviolate," and "Labour encouraged and honoured."

The Budget was dwelt upon, as also commercial treaties, a new economic *régime*, the reconstitution of the Army and the Navy. Burning questions were glided over, such as the clerical question; the Higher Education

Law and the Mayors' Law, so much blamed, were hardly alluded to. The whole was wise, temperate, soothing. M. Dufaure was *reassuring*.

Moderate applause greeted this address. The hour for Messages from the President was past; only Ministers, mere equals, had now to be dealt with.

The Senate gave a sign of encouragement to the new Cabinet by electing, on the 15th March, M. Ricard as a Life-Senator, instead of M. de la Rochette, deceased.

The *bureaux* of the two Chambers paid on the 18th March a formal call on Marshal McMahon at the Presidency House at Versailles, thus bringing the Parliament into touch with the Executive.

And now Parliament set to work.

Disunion of the Majority.

A first consequence of the *scrutin d'arrondissement* made itself felt as soon as the session began; Parliamentary forces, instead of being grouped into one powerful stream, were scattered like so many shallow rivulets. Gambetta tackled this question already on the 7th March, before the opening of Parliament. "It is essential," said he, "that each of us should be able to speak in the name of the whole majority, not only the majority in the Assembly but in the nation." The eloquent young party-leader was proud of his quadruple success. Assisted by numerous colleagues, carried away by exultation, he went straight at the difficulty, and called together a full meeting of the Lefts. That meeting was a failure.

General meeting of the Lefts.

On the 12th March, a second attempt was made, and, this time, more than 300 members of Parliament, Deputies and Senators of the Left, attended. Gambetta stated the object of the meeting. It was to group together all the forces of

the party and, by this understanding, to parry the dangers of discord upon which their adversaries counted. He attacked the Cabinet, showing his hand rather prematurely. "In the face of political acts so grave and so incorrect as those which we have seen within the last three days, it is impossible that the majority should remain impassive, dumb and motionless. . . . It is said that the new majority will be kept in its place. . . . I do not wish to provoke the fall of the Cabinet; but I am surprised that M. Casimir-Perier's conditions should have been rejected, and that he should have found successors. I do not complain of in-coming Ministers, but of those who should go out and do not: this is not distrust, but neither is it trust."

Gambetta, like every one else, it is true, felt uncomfortable. His impatient ambition and dictatorial manners were publicly criticised. The Extreme Left still supported him because it hoped to rule, through him, the formidable group which he was trying to form. The more moderate parties, on the contrary, were uneasy; they feared to alarm general opinion. They preferred to proceed by stages. They felt the advantage of multiplying possible combinations and of prolonging the game of see-saw by which the least motion of the centre groups might decide the majority.

Under that latent opposition, the influence could be felt of such great leaders as M. Thiers, Jules Grévy, and Jules Simon. Jules Ferry, outspoken as ever, explained the reservations of his friends on the 19th March, when taking the chair of one of the reconstituted groups, the Republican Left. "In order to remain united," said he, "really and not merely apparently united, the true system is to remain distinct. That is not dividing a party, but fortifying it whilst classifying it. Discipline, without which the Parliamentary system is but hazard and

anarchy, can only be learnt and consolidated in separate, limited groups, homogeneous in their composition ; transactions between extremes can only take place through the action of intermediary elements."

This was giving a preponderance to "intermediary elements"; it was a prudent procrastination of the advent which Gambetta would have precipitated. This moment gave birth to many years of struggle and perhaps necessary suffering. Gambetta's friends have denounced to history the "manœuvres, intrigues and wretched distrust" which rose up against the chief and his designs. Gambetta himself said: "The present and the future will prove, you may be sure, the blunder that was committed by the division of the Republican majority. . . . I believe that we must keep our freedom of action until it is obvious to all that the true course is to constitute a compact Republican majority, resolved to make the Government feel its power."

Gambetta's rivals, on the other hand, blamed his tactics, in which they saw error and peril. They exaggerated differences of opinion by which they hoped to profit.

In a word, the cleverness of the adversaries of the Republic, masters of the Presidency, the hasty constitution of the Dufaure Cabinet and a latent antagonism between Republicans, created, from the very first, a state of things which singularly perturbed and complicated the working of the new institutions.

On the 24th March, whilst the Republican Left of the Chamber was reconstituted under the presidency of M. Jules Ferry and the Left Centre under M. Paul Bethmont, about seventy-five deputies, followers of Gambetta, refused to organise themselves in a separate group. The Extreme Left asserted its resolve to act on its own account and according to its own views.

First Session.

The short session which preceded the Easter Vacation saw the opening of debates essential to the character and consolidation of the Republican *régime:* a debate on social philosophy *à propos* of the intervention of the clergy in the elections; a debate on political direction *à propos* of an amnesty motion, and a debate on Government practice *à propos* of the Mayors' Law.

The question of clergy interference came up on the subject of the verification of powers. The worth of an Assembly can be measured by its impartiality. Recently elected majorities abuse their strength when the elections have been severely fought and the results disputed. One of the dangers which threaten Liberty under the Representative *régime* is the oppression of the vanquished by the vindictive pursuit of the victors. There is something savage in a victory which is completed by the murder of the fallen foe.

Invalidations.

In 1876, the two Chambers, at the same time, had to verify the powers of their members. The Senate showed itself very accommodating, though several cases of "administrative pressure" had been notified. The Chamber, more ardent, held over several elections during which irregularities and illegalities had taken place. The elections of M. Malartre at Yssingeaux, M. Fairé at Angers, M. Haentjens in the Sarthe, M. Peyrusse at Auch, M. de Nivernon in Haute-Loire, M. de la Rochejacquelein in the Deux-Sèvres, M. Goyon at Guingamp, M. Cunéo d'Ornano at Tonnerre, M. d'Aygues-vives at Toulouse, M. Veillet at Loudéac, M. Rouher at Ajaccio, and several others in Corsica were invalidated. A Parliamentary inquiry was ordered into the case of M. Tron at Saint-Gaudens.

An animated debate took place concerning the elections in which a clerical influence was particularly notorious,

such as that of M. Boigne at Thonon, of M. Chesnelong at Orthez, and that of the Comte de Mun at Pontivy.[1]

Clerical Interference.

The report on the last-named election had been entrusted to M. Henri Brisson. M. de Mun was a "Catholic Candidate." His competitors were the Abbé Cadoret, a Canon of Saint-Denis, a Bonapartist, and M. Le Maguet, a Republican. M. Henri Brisson concluded in favour of an inquiry. He pointed out the intervention of the Bishop of Vannes, Mgr. Becel, who had written to the Comte de Mun a letter made public in the course of the electoral campaign, and which, by reason of the great personal authority of the prelate, had had an undeniable influence over the Catholics of the constituency; "Monsieur le Comte," wrote the Bishop, "you speak, you write, you act as an Apostle . . . your failure would be a public misfortune. . . . Every truly sacerdotal soul utters the same wish and shares the same hope. . . . The Morbihan will be honoured by having chosen you to carry and to support the flag of its Catholic, Apostolic and Roman faith. . . ."

This was formal and direct interference on the part of the Church, all the more remarkable because a priest competed with M. de Mun. It was an appeal to the faith of Catholics; the Candidate was expressly supported by the authority of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

M. de Mun neither denied the facts nor the interference. He refused an inquiry, and demanded, of the equity of the Chamber, either validation or invalidation. "I stood as a Catholic Candidate," he declared, "announcing my intention to take the teachings of the Catholic Church as the rule of my political life. It is

[1] Eighteen invalidations took place. MM. Cunéo d'Ornano, de Feltre, de Peyrusse, Haentjens, Gavini, Malartre, de la Rochejacquelein and de Mun were re-elected in May 1877; the other seats were occupied by Republicans. Prince Jerome replaced M. Rouher at Ajaccio.

my right, a right which is the duty of every man who holds the faith which I now defend before you. The Church is threatened, attacked. It must defend itself. Let me say it to you: the challenge has been heard, and Catholics have taken it up. . . . There are, everywhere, in France, Christian populations who do not wish their faith molested. . . . I refuse an inquiry, because it will be directed in general against the action of the clergy in electoral matters. You are seeking an occasion to open an anti-Catholic campaign, a religious scandal. If you refuse to Catholic Candidates the right to stand as champions of their threatened religion, you have but one thing to do, that is to invalidate my election."

The Comte de Mun, well aware of the part played in Germany by the Catholic Centre, evidently sought to inaugurate analogous tactics in France. Did not the Parliamentary *régime* secure equally efficacious advantages for the Church, which disposed in France of such dense masses? To bow to modern ideas, to enter into Liberty in order to make it serve for the greater glory of God, was a clever attitude, and perhaps a noble evolution. Minds less enthusiastic, hearts less ardent might well have been deceived by it. That France, that French Catholics should cause this calculation to fail, this appeal to go unheard, seemed a very improbable eventuality; that the authority, honourable character and many virtues which distinguish the French clergy should have but an almost negative influence on the policy of the nation was an hypothesis that no one, even among adversaries, would have accepted at that time.

The prouder the claim, the more dangerous it seemed, and M. Henri Brisson, while rendering homage to the frankness and sincerity of the Comte de Mun, made all

the more evident the necessity for a debate. "The question is to know," said he, "whether the Catholic party, the Clerical party, the association which governs it, seizing upon the Church, seizing upon men who, like the Bishops and Archbishops—without being public functionaries in the full meaning of the word, are at least salaried by the State—whether those men may intervene in our political struggles, and whether we can afterwards be told in their name; 'Stop! you have nothing to do with those facts; they are beyond your competence; they partake of a sacred character. . . .' It is that mixture of the sacred and profane which produces this equivocation, an equivocation which has been abused against us, and which we have a right to dissipate; let the Church remain in her own domain if she does not wish to fall under our investigation."

M. Henri Brisson declared that he did not speak in the name of a "jealous, mean, exclusive and limited sect," but "in the name of equity, of liberty of conscience, of a threatened national independence."

An eminent Catholic, M. Keller, traced the limits which he considered suitable for the practical action of the clergy. He allowed it the right of supporting candidates, "on the condition that the institutions of the country should not be attacked." This condition revealed the embarrassment of the Catholics and pointed to the tendencies which later on were manifested by Leo XIII. But M. Keller strongly denied the "clerical conspiracy" which M. Henri Brisson had denounced. "No, no," he cried, "it is not prudent, it is not politic to set from the first the Republic and the Constitution in a hostile attitude towards religious sentiment in France. . . ." He would avoid that redoubtable rupture.

M. Gambetta answered. He hailed in the Comte de Mun a new Montalembert. He spoke of the action of

the Church in moderate and well-thought-out terms. He said that the Republican party would combat not religion, but clerical interference. An inquiry was necessary to establish that this interference had taken place, and to distinguish what was legitimate from what was excessive. "We ask you to legislate upon facts and to take measures in order that, in the future, the pulpit should not become an instrument of electoral pressure, and that the clergy, which is entitled to respect from all, should know that, in order to deserve and to preserve this respect and to avoid those violent reprisals which you fear, and which will not come, it must first of all accomplish a duty, the duty of living among our modern society as an agent of concord and pacification."

The inquiry was ordered by 307 votes against 169.

Amnesty.

The Extreme Left, entering from the first upon tactics which were destined often to hinder more moderate Republican parties, had decided to introduce a request for amnesty before any debate took place. Victor Hugo at the Senate and M. Raspail in the Chamber accepted the task of submitting identical propositions to the two Chambers. MM. Victor Hugo, Schœlcher, Scheurer-Kestner, A. Peyrat, and a few other Senators had signed the proposition. In the Chamber, thirty signatures were appended to the motion, including those of MM. Clemenceau, Allain-Targé, Lockroy, Spuller, but not that of M. Gambetta: M. Rouvier was to propose a partial amnesty in the course of the debate.

M. Dufaure demanded urgency (21st March). It was arranged that the Senate would only hold a debate after the Chamber had done so. Committees were appointed, M. Paris to be Reporter for the Senate Committee, and, for the Chamber Committee, M. Leblond, a friend of M. Thiers, M. Thiers being aimed at by the Victor Hugo-Raspail proposition.

In the Chamber as in the Senate, the majority, supported by the Right, was hostile. The Government, through the mouth of M. Ricard, energetically opposed an amnesty. Urgency was declared. The Left wanted to retard the discussion; the Right, hoping to embarrass the Republican party, demanded an immediate discussion, holding a hand out to the Government, which it would not have been sorry to compromise. This manœuvre was led by M. Raoul Duval.

On the 11th April, M. Leblond presented his Report to the Assembly: he concluded against the Raspail proposition, with the reservation of an appeal to a wide clemency by means of pardons. The discussion was postponed until after the Easter vacation. The propositions of the Extreme Left embarrassed the Government as well as the majority.

However, Parliament set to work. Floods having taken place in Paris and in the neighbourhood, a credit of 1,750,000 francs was voted on the 28th March. On the 20th March, M. Paul Bert moved the introduction of the elective principle into the Departmental Councils of Public Education. On the 4th April, M. Henri de Lacretelle moved the organisation of free, compulsory lay education. On the 6th April, M. Paul Bert moved a resolution to increase school-masters' pensions, and urgency was voted. It was the beginning of the popular education campaign.

On the 21st March, a debate opened in the Senate, initiated by M. de Parieu, on the monetary question. M. de Parieu advised the immediate adoption of the gold standard only. M. Léon Say, Minister of Finance, supported the *status quo*, i. e. the double standard, with optional suspension of the minting of five-franc pieces.

M. Maigne on the 26th March and M. Deschanel on

the 26th May, demanded freedom for hawking; MM. Naquet, Vernhes and Barodet, of the Extreme Left, the absolute liberty of the Press.

MM. Maigne and Boysset, of the Extreme Left, demanded the abrogation of the law which prescribed Sunday rest. The activity of the advanced groups in the Chamber held the attention of the public and spurred on the majority.

The Senate drew lots on the 29th March, to decide which Departments should be the first to proceed to Senatorial triennial elections. The Departments having been divided into three groups, according to alphabetical order, the B series came out first. Now, the Departments included in that series were those which had sent the smallest number of Republicans to the Senate. "Chance had favoured the Republic."

The Budget for 1877.

On the 14th March, 1876, M. Léon Say had brought to the Chamber the draft of the 1877 Budget. It was a "waiting" Budget. "No tax is increased," said the preliminary statement, "but no reform is proposed." This sentence might have been the motto of the Cabinet itself. Ninety-six millions of extra expenses allocated to Public Education, Navy, War, and Public Works were to be covered by the normal operation of the taxes.

Gambetta Chairman of the Budget Committee.

The Budget Committee was elected on the 3rd April. It was composed of three members from the Right and thirty from the Left, and it chose M. Gambetta as its Chairman. He thus occupied a redoubtable position which gave him an immediate and powerful influence on the general march of affairs. This stroke was a surprise. Men were not yet accustomed to see in the popular orator a practical man, a calculator and a mover of reforms. Gambetta evidently wished to destroy the legend with which the

obstinacy of adverse polemics had surrounded him. And then, he holds the Government who holds the purse-strings.

For the first time, the advent of the "new social strata" asserted itself by that masterly stroke. Gambetta declared it in his opening address: "We have wished to enter into the Budget Committee, in order to face realities, to study more closely the details of our financial *régime*, without haste and without illusions. Solely inspired by a spirit of economy, maturity and wise reform, we will leave nothing to chance, being convinced that, in these delicate matters, time and public opinion cannot be hurried."

He too was becoming "reassuring."

Moreover, a general pacification, an instinctive confidence was beginning to prevail, in spite of existing difficulties. The Republic was settling down; ill-humours had begun to subside, and adventurous proposals were not accepted without question. An ardent minority was not sufficient to cause real anxiety; France wished for nothing but rest after such a long period of agitation. At any rate, such was the opinion of the men who were in power.

The Exhibition of 1878.

On the 5th April, the *Journal Officiel* published a decree initiated by M. Teisserenc de Bort, according to which a Universal Exhibition of industrial products should open in Paris on the 1st May, 1878. The Report addressed to the President of the Republic ran thus: "By announcing to the world a new International Exhibition, France asserts her confidence in the institutions which she has adopted, . . . and proclaims her desire for peace."

Both those sentiments were true; 1870 was already very far behind.

A decree of the 3rd April, due to a proposition by

M. Waddington, Minister of Public Education, instituted a Universal Exhibition of Fine Arts.

Those opportune measures were silently strengthening the Government; the latter took pains to fulfil its duty as an intermediary loyally and without illusions concerning the somewhat precarious and transitory character which it owed to its origin.

M. Ricard, speaking on the 24th March, had said how necessary were these precautions: "What we desire above all things is to found a wise and eminently Conservative Republic. It would be a treason towards the country, *towards M. le Maréchal de MacMahon, who is responsible for general order* . . . if we did not do our best to govern according to those principles. . . ."

However, the Cabinet could not indefinitely prolong a policy of neutrality and abstention. The passions which had perturbed the country at the time of the election were still in existence. With whom, for whom and by whom should the Ministry govern? Those subjects were the very essence of Government and could not be set aside.

On the 18th March, MM. Gambetta, Clemenceau, Floquet, etc., had asked the Chamber to raise the state of siege in the four departments in which martial law still prevailed: Seine, Seine-et-Oise, Bouches-du-Rhône and Rhône. The Bill was voted without discussion, by the Chamber on the 24th March, and by the Senate on the 3rd April. It was the first Bill sent from the Chamber to the Senate. Senator Scherer, entrusted with the Report, remarked upon it; his warning was perhaps not unneeded by the Senate: "Invited for the first time to ratify a resolution of the other Chamber, it has seemed to us that we should show our disposition to act, as far as possible, in harmony with that body. Agreement between the three powers, *do not let us forget it*, is a condition of

strength and of dignity for the Government of the country."

The Extreme Left, pursuing its tactics, proposed, on the 4th April, through M. Barodet, the re-establishment of the Central *Mairie* in Lyons. On the 23rd March, M. Charles Rolland had asked the Senate to restore to the Municipal Councils the right of nominating mayors, which had been taken from them by the Broglie Law. On the 29th March, 1876, MM. Jules Ferry, Bethmont, etc. . . . moved a similar resolution in the Chamber. Here the Moderate Left, and even the friends of M. Thiers intervened. The Mayors' Law had been one of the notorious measures taken by the Government of the 24th May: Marshal MacMahon had a part in it. In a normal Parliamentary *régime*, such apparent contradictions do not embarrass the head of the Executive; but had the Marshal, holding the Septennal power, the responsibility of the acts accomplished under his name, or was he not answerable for them? Had he, could he, have a policy of his own?

A fact which added to the gravity of the debate was that the Ferry motion had been adopted in the course of a general meeting of the Left *bureaux* held on Sunday, the 26th March, in the course of which the slowness of the Government in keeping its promises had been violently attacked.

M. Ricard, alarmed, begged the Left *bureaux* to hear, "in a confidential conversation," the observations suggested to him by a motion of that importance. Some secret resistance was evidently present, a certain pressure from the Élysée could be felt. But the Moderate Left, fearing to become suspect in its turn, was not inclined to be moved. M. Jules Ferry, in a letter to the *Gironde*, defined, forcibly and ironically, the dispositions of the majority. "The majority in the Chamber is neither

ill-disposed nor exacting; it is not even morose. The *République Française* is morose: the majority is not. It has taken quite seriously the programmes of wisdom and patience which shone so reassuringly in M. Gambetta's last campaign. It is anxious to appear neither impatient nor imperious. . . . But the Cabinet would make a grave mistake if it took this prudent attitude for irresolution in principles. M. Dufaure's idea seems to be to bind the question of the Mayors to that of the organic Municipal Law . . . in order to end, after some years' study, in municipal elections which might be followed by the election of the Mayors by the Councils. . . . Those are an old man's dreams. . . . If the Council of Ministers has not yet made up its mind, France has made up hers. . . ."

On the 5th April, M. Louis Legrand submitted to the Chamber his Report on both the Jules Ferry and the Raspail motions. They were taken into consideration. M. Jules Ferry demanded urgency. The Cabinet had reflected; or rather, as it was now being said, the Minister of the Interior had been able to overcome the obstacles raised by the Executive against the abrogation of the law of 1874, and it no longer refused an immediate discussion. Urgency was therefore declared.

The Chamber won the first encounter; here are again M. Jules Ferry's comments: "This majority is not being sought for, it offers itself. During the last week, the Cabinet does not seem to have seen this. . . . Isolated or worried, rarely present at the Assembly, rarely visible at the Place Beauvau, the Cabinet seems to hide, to fear the light and to avoid being questioned. . . . Now, not only does it accept urgency, it goes so far as to give it a motive. It speaks of the Broglie law, of which some of the Cabinet's friends suggested that an instrument should be made, in the same tone as it is spoken of amongst the

groups of the Left. . . . The shaft will go straight to the heart of those fighting municipalities which had already begun to raise their heads. . . . There are some special instructions addressed to the *Préfets*. M. Ricard has shown them to the delegates of the Left. . . . The moral to be drawn from all that is that the majority possesses, through its own organisation, *and without having recourse to the noise of general meetings*, all the means of a measured but efficacious Parliamentary action. The satisfactory attitude of the Cabinet is undoubtedly due to the officious, but resolute, intervention of the Chairmen of the groups. . . . The Cabinet seemed lacking in initiative; it is no longer so. . . ."

The Parliamentary *régime* seemed at last in working order. The Lefts were organising themselves, the power was drawing back, and perhaps a new leader for the majority was forthcoming.

II

But the start was difficult nevertheless. As every man tried to pull in his own direction, the Constitution contented nobody. The Cabinet was smothered under various claims; it vegetated but did not progress; it remained because it was motionless.

The short holidays taken by the Chamber until the 10th May were used by the Cabinet in settling current matters. Already before the adjournment of the Chamber, it had, by a series of decrees, tackled the most thorny, the most necessary part of its task, the question of the *personnel*.

The strength which is inherent in administration may, to a certain extent, hamper Parliamentary authority in France in times of transition. But, after a victory like that of the 20th February, a complete change was inevitable. Terror hovered over the world of officials, who had for

years been struggling to ward off the unavoidable moment. The hour had now come: the *personnel* of the Empire, maintained or restored by the 24th May, was on its trial. Only one hope remained to it: the solidarity which was imposed upon Marshal MacMahon, if not as a duty, at least as a matter of form, by a common origin.

Administrative changes.

A decree of the 21st March, published in the *Officiel* of the 22nd, began the series of holocausts. Five *préfets* were dismissed, three were placed on half-pay. M. Després (Tarn-et-Garonne) was "called to another post," a softened form of dismissal. Four were "allowed to claim their pension." Baron Leguay, *Préfet* of the Nord, was elected a Senator.

Twelve *préfets*, of whom seven had already filled similar posts under M. Thiers, were immediately nominated. The Republic was sowing the seed of its future political and administrative harvest. Here are their names: Bouches-du-Rhône, M. Doniol; Gironde, M. Decrais, Lot-et-Garonne, M. Félix Renaud; Meurthe-et-Moselle, M. Albert Gigot; Haute-Garonne, M. Achille Delorme; Doubs, M. Paul Cambon; Aube, M. Develle; Tarn-et-Garonne, M. Herbette; Pas-de-Calais, M. Tenaille-Saligny; Puy-de-Dôme, M. Tirman.

This was but a preface. During the Easter holidays, the *Journal Officiel* of the 14th and 15th April announced a second movement. Eleven *préfets* were eliminated, of whom four were dismissed. Several *sous-préfets* were set aside or called upon to resign. Thirty-three *préfets* and *sous-préfets* left their post for another, more or less important. Some names became well known in the future: M. Hendlé was appointed *Préfet* of the Yonne, and M. Bihourd, General Secretary in the Charente; M. de Chazelles, sent from the Cantal to the Hautes-Pyrénées, protested in a public letter, in which he sheltered himself behind the name of Marshal MacMahon: "I

will not conclude, Monsieur le Ministre, without assuring you that I remain deeply devoted to the Government of the Marshal. A day will come, perhaps, when, after having made many concessions, after having deprived himself of his surest friends, he whom we persist in considering as our chief will seek to go against the fatal current which has brought so many *régimes* to their ruin. In that sphere of action which remains open to me, I shall not be one of the least ardent in defending his cause."

What this one said, the others thought. It would have been surprising if no echo from the general chorus of protests had reached the Élysée.

M. Ricard, Minister of the Interior, completed those measures by several circulars addressed to the new *préfets*, one of them relating to the nomination of Mayors, another concerning hawkers, another still indicating the political line to be followed henceforth: "You must make your position very clear; you are the representative of the Republic; you have to accomplish a work of pacification . . . you represent a Government which is neither that of a class nor of a sect . . . you are the natural intermediary between the citizens and the central power. The duty of benevolence and impartiality which is imposed upon you by that *rôle* will be easy to you if you consider that the Republic excludes all party spirit from the Government. . . ." Even that was not considered sufficient.

The Cabinet and Education Reforms.

M. Waddington had undertaken to state on a solemn occasion the doctrine of the Cabinet on matters no less delicate, on the subject of the reform of the three degrees of Education. At the closing sitting of the congress of Scientific Societies, he promised early improvements in Higher Education by giving greater width and elasticity to programmes and methods.

He defined modern progress by a pregnant formula: "More hygiene and more space." He insisted on the indispensable development of popular education. He announced that the Government should not enter without reflection on a course of compulsion, but that everything should be prepared to reach this as soon as possible; many schools were about to be built in order to be sufficient for all needs. In the meanwhile the number of school-masters was to be greatly increased and new training colleges were to be created.

Bye-elections took place on the 16th and 30th April in seven constituencies, as a result of double elections; they reinforced the Republican majority and accentuated the movement towards the Left. M. Gustave Mazure (Extreme Left) was elected at Lille; M. Jules Bouquet (Extreme Left) at Marseilles; M. Cantagrel (Republican) in the XIIIth *arrondissement* (Paris), and M. Pascal Duprat (Republican) in the XVIIth; M. Camille Sée (Republican) at St. Denis; M. Rollet (Republican) at Saint Amand, and M. Léon Pagès (Moderate Republican) at Montauban, instead of M. Prax-Paris (Bonapartist).

"Death of M. Ricard."

The session reopened on the 10th May. On the 11th May, at 12 p.m., the sudden death was announced of M. Ricard, Minister of the Interior. He had been struck down in full activity by an attack of angina pectoris; cares of State had undermined his robust frame and hastened the fatal issue. This was a blow for the Cabinet and for the Republican party. M. Ricard, not without some hesitation, had finally found his way; he had conquered the favour of the majority, at one time withheld from him. Younger and more active than M. Dufaure, he was for the latter a valuable collaborator.

M. de Marcère.

On the next day, a decree entrusted the post, provisionally, to the Under-Secretary of State, M. de Marcère, and, on the 15th May, M. de Marcère was appointed Minister.

The choice caused some astonishment; another solution had been thought of. "A brilliant and politic solution," writes M. Jules Ferry, "would have been the admission into the Cabinet of a new man, one only, but whose name was Jules Simon! . . . That would have been too good. The step forward would have been too marked. The Élysée had not come to an understanding with M. Casimir-Perier, *a fortiori* with M. Jules Simon. The Marshal had not yet come to that! The choice of M. de Marcère was a happy expedient." M. Léopold Faye, quæstor of the Chamber, took his place as Under-Secretary of State.

The Extreme Left continued to introduce, almost rhythmically, the series of motions and resolutions which made up its programme: on the 15th May, MM. Laisant, Denfert-Rochereau and others, asked the Chamber to appoint a Committee of twenty-two members in order to examine the various military Bills; on the 17th May, M. Schœlcher submitted to the Senate a proposal for the abolition of capital punishment. On the 18th May, the same M. Laisant introduced a Bill signed by 130 Deputies, reducing to three years the term of military service and doing away with the *volontariat*.[1]

The Government opposed the consideration of this. Gambetta had to intervene (12th June) in order to prevent it. Gambetta and his friends, rejected by the Centres, were cut off from their Left: a Parliamentary situation which must be understood if the events which followed are to be intelligible.

[1] A special reduction of military service to one year only, granted on payment of 1,500 fr. (£60) to men who could pass a certain examination.

On the 11th, 17th, 18th and 19th May, the Chamber discussed the Amnesty. This debate, of which the issue was not in doubt, was nevertheless perilous for the Government and for the Republican majority; for it threatened to divide the latter and ran the risk of throwing the Cabinet back upon the Centres, towards which its own inclination carried it.

M. Clemenceau on the Amnesty.

The partisans of the motion appealed to the most poignant of human sentiments: Pity. Had not those men, Frenchmen, suffered enough? M. Clemenceau opened the debate by a powerful and clever speech which placed him in the first rank of Republican orators. M. Clemenceau has a bold, incisive mind, his words are winged and barbed. On that day, the emotion of the subject, memories of terrible scenes, some mysterious feeling of divided responsibilities, softened and attenuated his customary bitterness; he touched without wounding.

M. Clemenceau did not, as his adversaries accused him of doing, attempt to extol the Commune, but to explain it. After stating the causes, he pointed to the rigorous reprisals: 17,000 summary executions, 50,000 arrests, 14,000 sentences; 100,000 Parisians had fled, and were living in a voluntary exile, in fear of prosecution. Such suffering, so cruelly prolonged, should be ended.

The speaker refuted in advance the political argument: let us beware of alarming the country. "There are some men whom you will never satisfy . . . you will never succeed in reassuring men who are alarmed at seeing M. le Maréchal de MacMahon at the head of affairs, at seeing that he has a sense of his responsibility, and that he is inclined to apply the Constitution sincerely and loyally: men whom the present Government does not reassure will never be reassured. Grant amnesty and

forgetfulness now that it would be a sign of strength to do so; do not wait until it is a sign of weakness, until it is forced upon you by general opinion."

Another speaker, M. Lamy, a moderate Republican, answered M. Clemenceau and obtained an equal success in a more difficult situation. He counselled a *pardon*, as more prudent and more perspicacious than an *amnesty*, clemency being more generous than forgetfulness; he concluded with these words: "It is not by this debate that I should have wished our career to open. The past is not our domain; our true work lies in the great reforms, the great liberties which our country expects. But we must prove to all that, on the threshold of those liberties, and as their safeguard, the Republic places the maintenance of order and respect for the laws."

MM. Lockroy, Méline, Georges Périn, spoke again; the discussion became embittered by a less temperate intervention from M. Raspail, senior. His presence, his words, memories of previous quarrels, acted upon the temper of M. Dufaure. Some friction arose between the two old men before the astonished Chamber. M. Dufaure was bitterly ironical; he stirred up painful recollections: "Do you then judge of a crime by its utility? You say of that abominable massacre of men who had hurt nobody, who were renowned and venerable by their character and their actions, that their slaughter was 'not a political crime because it was a useless murder. . . .' If some advantage had come of it, the crime would have been a political one and therefore excusable! . . . You have no mandate to say that France has forgotten those crimes; it is not true! . . ." M. Dufaure was full of passion and inspired it in his hearers, but he lost his balance. The Greeks said that a statesman should be without passion. The Cabinet was leaning towards the Right. Anxiety spread throughout

the whole Republican party, and among the Ministers themselves. Fortunately, the discussion continued until Friday the 19th, and other orators were heard, including MM. Marcou, Gatineau, Floquet, the last-named supported by Gambetta. A wise speech from the Reporter, M. Leblond, set things back in their places and brought M. Dufaure to explain himself and to doff the air of ill-humour which he had assumed.

He suddenly consented with a good grace to explain the intentions of the Government and placed them in quite a different aspect. "Gentlemen, from the first moment when the question of an amnesty was raised the members of the Cabinet examined it and formed the following decision: To reject all proposals of amnesty; to demand the application of the right of pardon and to exercise it naturally, necessarily, with an even larger scope than that of the Pardons Committee united with the Government. Such is our resolution; you have left us the right of pardon, and it will be for us to fulfil a duty which we hold as dear as any one of you."

The proposal, with the reservation of that explanation, was rejected by 367 votes against 99.

The Senate and the Amnesty.

The debate at the Senate took place on the 22nd.

M. Victor Hugo showed that, in him, the orator equalled the poet. "If I go too far," said he, "if I exaggerate pity, remember that an excess of pity—if pity could be excessive—would be pardonable in one who has lived many years; remember that he who has suffered has a right to watch over those who are suffering, that an old man implores you for women and children, that an exile pleads before you the cause of the vanquished. . . . Have faith in yourselves. The intrepidity of clemency is the most beautiful sight which can be given to men. And, here, clemency would not mean imprudence but

wisdom. . . . Pity and gentleness are excellent means of ruling." No one answered Victor Hugo, save the Reporter, M. Paris, in one unfortunate phrase. "The silence of the Senate," said that obscure gentleman, "is an answer in itself."

The amnesty was rejected by a show of hands.[1]

The debate on the amnesty was an opening skirmish between the two camps. Would the new Government continue to spare the Right, or would it give in to the summons of the advanced Lefts?

Whilst the three discussions (on the question of the *personnel*, the constitutional question, and the clerical question) were awaited, the Extreme Left did not tire of moving a series of Bills which caused the Right to cry out in alarm: a motion from M. Sansas repealing the decree of the 27th December, 1851, on cafés and drinking-houses; one from M. Paul Bert, modifying the conditions of service of elementary school-masters and school-mistresses; a proposition of M. Naquet for the re-establishment of divorce; one from the same Deputy, repealing the law of 1852 on juries and giving a preponderance to the elective element over the judicial element. All this was a regular attack on the *bourgeois* society, sanctioned by the July Monarchy and "saved" by the Second Empire.

The situation was becoming more difficult for the Government every day.

Difficulties encountered by the Cabinet.

At the bye-elections (14th and 21st May) results were again favourable to the Republican party. In Corsica, Prince Napoleon was elected as a "Republican." Republicans were also victorious at Loudéac, Auch, Dax, Angers, and at Orthez, where M. Chesnelong,[2] whose previous election had been

[1] On the 28th June a certain number of pardons was granted by the President of the Republic, and many more followed.

[2] The defeat of M. Chesnelong was deeply felt by the Right, and steps were immediately taken to make him a candidate for a Life-Senatorship

annulled, was this time defeated by M. Vignaucourt. M. Haentjens, a Bonapartist, and the Marquis de la Rochejacquelein had a painful struggle at the Mans and at Bressuire. The Western provinces, hitherto so faithful to the Catholic and Conservative cause, showed signs of desertion.

Bye-Elections.

On the other hand, at Belfort, the Senatorial electors chose M. Vieillard-Migeon, a Conservative, in the place of M. Thiers, who had decided to take his seat in the Chamber; this fact, though an isolated one, was significant.

The Republican party wished to make a show of its success: Michelet having died at Hyères on the 9th February, 1874, his remains were translated to Paris on the 18th May, 1876, amidst a great popular gathering. At the Montparnasse Cemetery, MM. Bersot, Laboulaye, Havet, Quicherat and Challemel-Lacour delivered speeches which produced a great effect on young Republicans.

The two camps seemed to be hesitating before joining issue. In the Chamber, Parliamentary work was hampered by the difficulties with which preparatory committees had to deal. Nothing was ready to go on the agenda. M. Grévy complained and remonstrated with the various committees, particularly with the Budget Committee. Gambetta, who was chairman of the latter, was obviously uncomfortable, with the Extreme Lefts at his heels and the Moderate Lefts keeping a strict watch over him.

The Policy of the Élysée.

As for the Government, weakened by the death of M. Ricard, it was living under the eye of the Élysée. Changes in the *personnel* and in the municipalities were picked to pieces by the Marshal. The embarrassing situation of the Cabinet was brought into prominence by a discussion which took place on the 20th May, on the subject of the supersession of Mayors. "The Government obeys the exigencies of its friends," said M. de

Castellane; "under this *régime*, Ministers are obliged to give daily proofs of their attachment to the Republicans. A man has scarcely reached power when he has to break the career of twenty *préfets*. . . ." Baron de Tristan Lambert: "*Préfets* who have done nothing but support the Marshal, his policy and his Government." M. de Castellane: "Whom you can reproach with nothing but with the loyal application of that Conservative policy which you affected not to discard."

M. Jules Ferry wrote on the 23rd May in the paper *La Gironde:* "The legend of the 24th May has been carefully kept alive in the salons of the Elysée. Each dismissed *préfet* has come, in the last two months, to bring to that altar his tears and his drop of gall, to bear witness to his own martyrdom and to take note of his own holocaust. Each newly-appointed official has found himself the object of an underhand and malevolent inquiry, directed by an occult Cabinet, always on the watch for vindictive accusations and libels, and haunted by the three most fearsome ghosts of the old *régime:* the Cabinet is that of M. d'Harcourt, and the ghosts are M. Depeyre, M. de Broglie and M. Buffet."

This was a direct attack upon the Élysée. The persistent recollection of the 24th May weighs upon all that period of French Parliamentary History.

M. Ricard had declared in one of his last circulars "that *hopes, henceforth rebellious*, must be extinguished in the minds of all parties." The epithet *rebellious* irritated the Right. The right of revision was the last resource left to it by the Constitution: was that right to be questioned? The Marquis de Franclieu appealed to the Senate. The Senate was entrusted with the Constitution and with the tradition of the spirit in which it had been conceived. It was, like the Marshal, a "survival" of the 24th May. It was for the Senate to act.

M. Paris, who had been the Reporter of Clause VIII. of the Constitution in the National Assembly, pressed M. de Marcère: he wanted to wrench from him a public recognition of the right of Revision, permanent and constant; he wanted the door left open, officially, to Monarchical hopes. M. de Marcère was cleverly elusive. But the authority of M. Dufaure was necessary to enforce the new Ministerial theory which, in reality, wrecked the illusions of the Right: "The Minister of the Interior," said the President of the Council, coming to the assistance of his colleague, "has spoken as a Government should speak which consents to direct the destinies of the Republic. Some people believe that a Monarchical Government may one day be substituted for the Republic. As for the others, *as for us*, we look upon Clause VIII. as upon a means to modify the Republican Constitution, if it should require to be modified;" . . . adding with a veiled irony: "We have had the example of two Monarchies who looked upon their Charters as final Constitutions and who saw them completely changed by Revolutions. We have wished to have a more elastic Constitution, we have made it liable to revision in order to keep it longer, as long as we can."

This was a bitter pill for the Right, knowing as it did that it could not enter more fully into the struggle, being beaten in advance on the question *Republic* or *Monarchy:* it had to be content. But this would not be forgotten.

Higher Education.

M. Waddington, Minister of Public Education, a Protestant, had introduced, on the 23rd March, a Bill quite in accordance with the Ministerial declaration, rescinding Clauses XIII. and XIV. of the Law of the 12th July, 1875, on the liberty of Higher Education.

The preliminary statement thus characterised the Bill: "The liberty of teaching in nowise implies, for free Faculties, the right of conferring degrees. . . . The

greater the freedom, the more strict and efficient must supervision be. . . ."

The Law of 1875 had been the great Catholic achievement of the National Assembly. To modify it in one of its chief bearings, before it had even been applied, was to inflict the cruellest wound upon the men who had voted it. The question of the conferring of degrees was looked upon as a question of conscience.

The Bishops met; they published episcopal letters; petitions were signed everywhere. The Cardinal Archbishop of Paris raised his voice in the "General Congress of Catholic Councils." Mgr. Dupanloup, who was personally concerned, "struck to the heart," he said, appealed to Marshal MacMahon, who had come to Orleans on the 7th May, on the occasion of the Joan of Arc celebrations; he prayed that God might grant to the President "one of those divine enlightenments which enable a man to recover himself at the moment of peril."

On the 26th May, M. Spuller developed, in the name of the Committee, a Report favourable to the Government proposal. He pointed out that the Bill merely sanctioned a return to former legislation on the conferring of degrees, this being a function of the State. He concluded by a phrase which was bound to be seized upon and discussed: "We will vote for this reform because it is in conformity with the policy which we will follow, because we want to go slowly but surely. . . ." The discussion was fixed for the 1st June.

M. Paul de Cassagnac opened the debate, certainly not in order to restrict it or to moderate its tone. His aggressive, defiant and bitter words were followed by general disorder and an attack upon the impartiality of the chairman; a bad beginning.

M. Émile Deschanel answered with corresponding violence, speaking of "clerical hypocrisy, a shameful

alliance with political hypocrisy, the insolent claims of the Bishops, the criminal stupidity of the Empire, etc. . . ."

M. Keller spoke to the point when he declared that "the Bill now being discussed is a hostage given by the Minister to the new majority." For the debate was especially a political one. As for the opinion of the Catholics, it was summarised in one sentence by the same speaker: "I consider clerical monomania as a species of madness. You want to suppress Catholicism and you have nothing to put in its place."

M. Waddington, a man of gentle manners and quiet speech, declared that there was no question of attacking religion, and that the Republic in France had often granted to the clergy more liberties than a Monarchy had done.

M. de Mun, with his characteristic, elegant haughtiness and pressing warmth, held the Chamber in rapt attention: he became a prophet, alas! as he predicted the long struggle, the "war" which threatened to open in France. "These will be my last words: do not hope that the agitation of which you speak will calm down; do not hope that Catholic families will see with indifference the destruction of the work which they had watched with such great hopes. Faithful to their religion, which prescribes respect for the laws, but strong in their conscience and in their rights, the Catholics will never cease to protest against the violence which you intend to do them; they will entertain a firm hope that their voice —though powerless to arrest you in the war which you are declaring against us—will yet find an echo in another Assembly, which will grant them, we still believe, the justice which they demand."

That peroration was a political event; it formulated the appeal to the Senate.

M. Jules Ferry answered. He asserted the essential

principle of the Revolution, at bottom, the principle of every government in France: "The State is a laic State." Here lay the real issue. The new Republican institutions were being tested.

By 365 votes against 133, the Chamber passed on to the discussion of clauses. That number 365 was that of the united Republican majority; we shall often come to it again. The Bill was carried on the 7th June, by 357 votes against 123.

And the Senate? . . .

In the Chamber, on the 8th June, on the occasion of M. Naquet's motion to modify the conditions of recruitment of juries, the first debate opened on those propositions from the Extreme Left, which seemed so threatening. M. Dufaure found himself obliged to secede from that portion of the majority, though it had supported him on the day before. He attacked it bravely, but at the same time broke up the block which had supported him until then. He extricated himself with 254 votes, mostly from the Right, which rejected the Naquet proposal: 132 Republicans voted against the Government.

The Senate inaugurates resistance.

The Senate felt or thought itself the arbiter of the situation. An obscure work was going on amongst its members. The Right seized an opportunity of showing its strength: a Life-Senator had to be elected in the place of M. Ricard. The Lefts proposed M. Renouard, Procureur-Général in the Court of Cassation. The Rights put forward M. Buffet, so unpopular, even with the Right, a few months before; M. Buffet, whose name was a firebrand to the majority.

After the vote of the Chamber on the conferring of degrees, the Legitimists had come back towards the Moderate Rights and been received with open arms. M. Buffet was elected on the 16th June by 144 votes

against 141. The Élysée was said to have backed his candidature, whilst the Senators in the Cabinet had voted for M. Renouard.

On the preceding day (15th June), the Marshal had reviewed at Longchamps the whole of the troops stationed in the Paris district.

There was now once again in France a "policy of the Marshal."

III

Discontent among the leaders.

The Hoche banquet took place on the 24th June. Gambetta was in a bad temper. In his traditional speech, he attacked everybody: the Right and its "policy of spite," the "ridiculous and pretentious pygmies who, from behind their sofas, utter threats against the future of our institutions," and the majority. "Do you know what I fear most of all? it is a majority which lacks equilibrium and a counterweight, which lacks adversaries (indeed, these were not lacking!): a majority whose strength may turn its head." What with an undisciplined Chamber, an alarming Senate, a too independent President, the Constitution was not working satisfactorily.

M. de Cassagnac put to the Government a provoking question on the subject of the appointment of M. Jean David as Mayor at Auch. A rumour had spread that the Marshal disagreed with his ministers as to the establishment of new lists of Municipalities. M. de Cassagnac declared that all the United Rights supported the President against the Cabinet and against the majority. This tactless speech embarrassed men like M. Keller, who was honest enough to say so; still more, it embarrassed the Cabinet which had to vouch for the fidelity of the Marshal to Republican institutions.

The Mayors' Law. It remained to be seen whether or not the Marshal and the Cabinet were agreed upon the repeal of the Mayors' Law. This was the question of the moment. On Monday, the 29th May, the Minister of the Interior had introduced a Bill dealing with municipal organisation. Roughly speaking, it was a return to the Law of 1871. However, less Liberal than the latter, the Bill still reserved to the Government the appointment of Mayors in the principal towns, including the *chefs-lieux de canton*. The Marshal refused to go one step further. Yet this was a capital point in the eyes of the Left; it was, as M. Jules Ferry said, "the flesh of its flesh and the bone of its bone;" the basis of the whole political recruiting rests upon the organisation of municipalities, since municipalities influence Universal Suffrage and hold the Senatorial Suffrage. The Republican party thought that it should be ready in case of a dissolution.

The Bill was referred to a committee of which M. Jules Ferry was elected Chairman and Reporter. His policy was not quite the same as Gambetta's, but more prudent and careful to keep in touch with the Élysée. Jules Ferry adopted at that time a theory of government which he applied henceforth throughout his political career: he did not dream of weakening the Constitutional powers through each other, but tried to strengthen them by making the most of the special attributes of each. Considering the vagueness and lack of precision of the Constitution, this showed deep political insight. The institutions would thus have improved of their own accord by practice in working.

Like the majority in the Chamber, the Committee's opinion was that the Bill was insufficient; but, if the Élysée refused to give way, was it best to agree or to hold out? This was at the same time a question of principle and a question of procedure.

About the middle of June, the situation became grave: "A Ministerial crisis and a Government crisis, one of the decisive crises of our infant Republic," wrote M. Jules Ferry.

Whilst negotiations were going on, the news of the Buffet election came like a thunderbolt. The Élysée had now, in the Senate, a majority on which it could depend.

The Committee urged the Cabinet to make the Bill a more Liberal one. The Cabinet was elusive, evidently bound by engagements. Every combination presented to it was met by an irreducible *No.* "The resistance of the Cabinet is like a blank wall."[1] What was to be done?

The Right, probably kept well informed, easily guessed at the embarrassment of the Government and the majority; so that, of course, it insisted that the Bill should be placed on the order of the day.

The Report was presented; but the Republican majority, irritated, refused to fall in. A friend of M. Gambetta, M. Le Pomellec, drafted an amendment giving the appointment of Mayors to all Municipal Councils except that of Paris. The leaders of the three Left groups, MM. Germain, Bethmont and Gambetta, conferred with M. Dufaure and obtained from him a promise to consult the Council—that is, the Marshal—once again.

The Marshal's Declaration.

The Council met on the 1st July. The Marshal himself opened the subject. "Where are you with the municipal law?" he asked of M. de Marcère; and, when the situation had been explained to him: "But you have no majority," he cried. "You cannot govern without a majority." (This was an outline of the coming tactics of the 16th May.) "If you

[1] Jules Ferry, *Discours et Opinions*, vol. ii., p. 263.

have no majority, you must try to find one. As for me, you must know that I shall go no further. I will make no concessions. You, Monsieur de Marcère, you are my extreme limit. I will say no more. If you cannot form a majority, I will look for one elsewhere. And people would be mistaken if they thought that I should seek for it further on the Left side, or that I should change the Ministers for War or Foreign Affairs, whose services have been appreciated by the whole of Europe. If people will not agree, there remains Dissolution. And, this time, things will not go as they did before. Nobody will be authorised to use my name."[1]

Resistance was impossible. An agreement took place between the Marshal and the Government, then between the Government and the Committee. The latter, by a majority of nine votes to two, accepted, provisionally, the proposition of the Cabinet, *i. e.* the Law of 1871, modified in that the appointment of the Mayor in a *chef-lieu de canton* was left to the Government. The discussion opened on Tuesday, the 11th July. The Gambetta–Le Pomellec amendment was the ground upon which the battle should take place. If the Senate had not manifested its opinion by the Buffet election, the chances of resistance might have been reckoned by the Left. But, now, it would mean the certain conflict of one power against the two others. M. Jules Ferry, whose political physiognomy became very marked at that moment, said, in supporting the Committee in the Chamber: ". . . I know that there are amongst my honourable colleagues on the Left benches, eminent politicians who belong to another school of thought. They have dreamt, and they seem content with that dream, that it would be sufficient for us to legislate here as if we were the only Assembly and rejoicing

[1] *Times* account, denied evasively by the *Agence Havas.*

in our isolation, to decide everything, to organise everything according to our own wishes, without a thought for the other Assembly. That is a policy, I admit, but not an efficacious policy; and, allow me to say so, if such a policy had been followed during the last five years, France would not now be in possession of the Republic."

M. Gambetta answered, and the duel between those two was as interesting for the destinies of the Republic as it was significant. M. Jules Ferry, keeping on the defensive, unnerved and wearied his brilliant adversary; his occasionally sarcastic tone excited and broke down the hot and passionate impulse of the young tribune.

Jules Ferry and Gambetta.

M. Gambetta was not in a good position. Carried away by his haste, by his desire to break down the traps laid before him, he lost his temper and the thread of his speech, and sometimes contradicted himself. A first bout was not successful, but, excited by the struggle, he ascended the tribune again, and, leaving on one side all show arguments, he denounced the phantom of respect which others had not dared to approach. "I do not find the motive which paralysed the committee. . . . There is evidently something in this policy which escapes us. . . . As for me, I say it plainly, *I do not feel free.*"

The shaft struck home. "A prolonged movement," says the official account.

M. de Marcère, in measured terms, asked the Chamber to reflect before touching "the harmony of the powers." Besides, the votes of the Right were secured beforehand. The Chamber, by 389 votes against 76, rejected the Le Pomellec amendment. Gambetta was beaten; but he had recaptured his position with the Advanced Lefts.

M. Le Pomellec withdrew his amendment to Clause II. It was taken up again by M. Madier de Montjau. A

mere manifestation: the amendment was rejected. The Right, with a directly opposite intention, proposed a simple return to the Law of 1871, without any success. At the ballot, M. Gambetta and several of his colleagues justified their absence by the formula "Detained at the Budget Committee." It was the first time that that excuse was given.

M. Jules Ferry was the victor of the day. He himself speaks thus of the consequences of this vote: "The first consequence was a new classification, more precise and less empirical, of the groups of the Left. The *Montagne* was reconstituted and finally severed from the Republican majority. M. Gambetta had wished to avoid that result when, at the beginning of the session, he urged the necessity of a union between the different sections of the Left. The severance is now accomplished. . . . The Extreme Left contains some essentially refractory elements. . . . The chief characteristic of this Assembly is its imperturbable good sense. M. Madier de Montjau will be unable to do it any harm. As to the situation of the *Union Républicaine* it is not so clear: divided as it is between two currents, that which bears it towards the Republican power and that which binds it to the malcontents. . . . The fifty members of the *Union Républicaine* who voted for the adjournment motion imagined by M. Gambetta knew perfectly well that they would not be followed; and the thirty refractory ones who thought well to stand apart were playing on velvet. . . . The central group, that Left majority, henceforth constituted outside the *Union Républicaine* itself, without help from either of the Centres, that majority which M. Gambetta has been watching with anxiety, but which will be his when he pleases—on the one condition that he acts with it and with it only—that majority will profit by the inevitable

escapades, the solemn nonsense, the false taste and the false spirit of the new *Montagne*."

A true piece of Parliamentary psychology. This penetrating page explains and crowns a remarkable manœuvre. Gambetta felt the grip of an equal.

Thus a very interesting *nuance* appeared. Marshal MacMahon could not persist in his sulks. His will could, up to a certain point, modify that of the Chamber. This was a very special *régime;* the Septennate was becoming a reality. In any case, if the Dufaure Cabinet should fall, a relay was at least prepared. . . . But, in those troubled days, prudence was an attribute of neither party. The friends of the Marshal thought but of confirming for the benefit of the Rights, a victory which had only been obtained with the assistance of the Lefts. The efficacy of resistance was extolled. The Senate was held up to the skies on account of M. Buffet's election. With the Presidency, the Senate, and the moderate sections of the Republican groups, it was thought that the 24th May could be repeated. . . .

The Senate and University Degrees.

The Senate was the cynosure of all eyes. It was discussing the Waddington Bill on the conferring of degrees. The Rights were united on that question, and even supported by some members of the Left, in the name of Liberal principles. The former leaders of the Assemblée Nationale now came to the front of the stage.

M. Paris, Reporter of the Senate Committee, concluded against the Bill. He supported, as being equitable, honourable and wise, the combination of a mixed jury, as it had been instituted by the Dupanloup law. A law which was not a year old, which had not yet been applied, could not be rescinded in that way at the caprice of a majority. Mgr. Dupanloup and M. Challemel-Lacour spoke; the wise M. Laboulaye declared

against the Bill "in the fear that this sudden change should turn Catholics against the Republic."

M. Wallon suggested a postponement to another session—time for reflection. But the battle had begun. It was not only a principle which was in question, a political position had to be conquered. Yes, or no, should the Senate have a determining and independent authority over the legislative and constitutional work of the Government?

The Duc de Broglie Leader of the Opposition.

The Duc de Broglie seized upon the flag. "This is the first important case in which the Senate is called upon to act! Will it follow the Chamber? The Senate was instituted precisely in order to guard against the disadvantages of popular caprice. Constituted like a sea-wall, to resist the waters, will it give way to the first wave which reaches it? By giving in, it will abdicate. . . . Political struggles are being transformed into religious struggles. That is the road to persecution. . . . At an election meeting (Lille, 6th February, 1876) M. Gambetta said, with arrogant authority: 'I will have that law repealed'; his voice has already been obeyed; if it is obeyed again, it will continue so until the end. The advanced party, for the first time since the elections, *approaches the power by a legal road.* It thinks itself very near to holding it. . . . It is trying to conciliate material interests. Those will be spared, but religious interests will be delivered over to those who are impatient. The object of that would be to inspire patience; time would be gained, and the 'policy of results' would reach its goal with the 'slow and sure step' which it has announced" (M. Spuller's speech) "and which it finds convenient."

How artistically was this first attack upon Republican institutions worded! Reasons, apprehensions, feelings of revenge, all these were awakened, caressed, stirred by

this harangue, pronounced in low tones, with pinched lips and an indifferent air.

The noble and fallen statesman revealed himself an incomparable Opposition leader.

M. Dufaure replied. He knew himself beaten beforehand, and pleaded, without conviction, a cause which he had not much at heart. He refuted in a moderate tone the famous argument of the *first step*. "We have already heard this language under the July monarchy, *à propos* of the electoral law of 1831. . . . You tell us that we are taking a first step, and that we do not know how far it will lead us. I say to you: 'You are making a first resistance. How far will you resist?'"

That was indeed the true question. Opinions were fixed. The benevolent M. Wallon had asked that the discussion be adjourned. His amendment failed to be carried, securing but 139 votes against 139; M. Wallon produced very equal divisions. By 144 votes against 139, the Senate decided not to pass on to the discussion of the clauses.

The Cabinet was beaten. It did not resign, by that one fact denying to the Senate an absolute Parliamentary authority over the Government. Yet the Constitution had not pronounced upon that point. The Senate, elated with its victory, did not trouble to push matters farther.

Conflict between the Chamber and the Senate.

The Chamber was beaten together with the Cabinet, and there lay the conflict. The Chamber immediately took up the gauntlet.

On the occasion of the appointment of the new Mayor of Valence, M. Deupès, M. de Cassagnac addressed a question to the Cabinet and pointedly distinguished the Marshal from his ministers. M. Gambetta seized the opportunity of answering the Duc de Broglie, and did so with singular force and clearness. He was not sorry to give a lesson to the temporisers.

Taking advantage of the opening offered by M. de Cassagnac, he aimed at the head, and made of the Cabinet itself a weapon against the Élysée: "It is necessary that the Chamber . . . should express its confidence in the Cabinet. A categorical vote of confidence is necessary to instruct the country and especially those . . . or rather, to speak plainly, him to whom your warnings should be addressed, to teach him that this Chamber, while respecting the Constitution, knows *how to get rid of those who get away from it.* . . . It is time to put an end to those attempts which tend to nothing less than to lend to the head of the State a rôle which would be in contradiction with the epithet 'loyal' with which you hail him. As to the Senate, I contributed to its constitution; I shall never regret it. A few stray votes, recruited with the help of certain intrigues, as you know, will not be sufficient to arrest the will of Universal Suffrage, and Universal Suffrage will have the last word."

Vote of confidence in the Dufaure Cabinet.

The vote of confidence was carried by 350 votes *nem. con.*

On the 23rd July, a very hot discussion took place in the Chamber, on the subject of some indiscretions respecting examination papers for the École Polytechnique. The Jesuit School of the Rue des Postes was aimed at, and the War Minister, M. de Cissey, was imperilled for a moment. He was saved by the promise of an inquiry; but the debate did him a great deal of harm.

The Cabinet, beaten in the Senate, carried off its feet in the Chamber, ill-supported by the Marshal, was dragging on a weary existence. M. Dufaure was discouraged. The death of M. Ricard had robbed him of his most powerful subordinate. M. de Marcère, in spite of his real eloquence and grace, had not acquired much influence over the Parliament.

However, both sides hesitated before opening battle; they counted their forces and reflected.

The 1877 Budget.

The Cabinet, taking advantage of this respite, asked the Chamber to pass the Budget. It was now the 23rd July, and the weather was very hot. The Deputies were impatient to go home; but they were anxious that the session should not end without having at least begun the discussion on the Budget. M. Gambetta, President of the Committee, had not forgotten the remonstrance addressed to the latter by M. Grévy. The Republic should make some show as a Government.

On the 17th July, all the special reports had been received by the *bureau* of the Chamber. M. Gambetta briefly explained the double aspect of the Committee's labours; on the one hand, the "household accounts had been put straight;" on the other, "a plan of financial reform had been considered and would be laid before the Chamber at the beginning of the autumn session."

The Republican party, which had made so many promises, now had to keep them. But, in face of the difficulty of the undertaking, it hesitated and worked laboriously at necessary preparations.

When the general discussion opened, on the 24th July, M. Haentjens, a Bonapartist, derided "the first Budget proposed by a Republican Government, elaborated for the first time by a Committee composed of Republicans." Nothing was done in fact, but to follow Monarchical errors and to repeat former methods. People who were so severe upon the Imperial budgets, now copied them faithfully! The taxpayer would only notice the change in the *régime* by seeing his burdens increased!

M. Léon Say replied to M. Haentjens: "The increase in the Republican Budget was but the ransom of Imperial faults and follies. Recriminations were useless; what ought to be done was to balance the resources of the

country with the expenses, and to examine, seriously and practically, the draft submitted to the Chambers."

The Budgets for Public Education and for War were considered first. In the Public Education Budget, the Chamber, determined to assume the vast undertaking of popular, compulsory, instruction, increased by twelve millions the various charges for Education. The religious Faculties were a pretext for disputes, such as took place whenever the religious question was touched upon.

The War credits gave rise to some passionate debates between the 1st and 11th August. The Reporter was M. Langlois, familiarly called "The Colonel." Gambetta was watching over this beginning of the relationship between the Republic and the Army. The adversaries of the new Government had from the very first intended to hinder that delicate alliance. Was not the Army a rightful possession of monarchical *régimes?* Could the military spirit be reconciled with the democratic spirit? Might not the religious feelings of the greater number of the officers be shocked by the declared anti-clerical disposition of the majority?

Gambetta, by his watchful sympathy and delicate foresight, rendered at that time a rare service to his country and to the Republic. He made himself, so to speak, the advocate of the Army, its defender, its patron: he found exactly the right course and succeeded in inspiring confidence, while introducing into the complicated War Budget the spirit of reform and economy which is too often odious to the routine of administrations and offices. It was one of his most brilliant, most successful campaigns. Gambetta was a man of great causes and great circumstances.

Fall of General de Cissey.

General de Cissey, Minister for War, formerly President of the Council, strong with the protection of Marshal MacMahon and the support

of M. Thiers, though intelligent and capable, was somewhat aged and under the thumb of his *entourage*. He was a butt for the Press: he had, without consulting Parliament, caused a decree to be signed which unified army pay according to a scale and which carried with it an additional expense of 32,500,000 francs. In order to express disapproval, the Chamber ended by voting a diminution of 3,000 francs, which the Minister had to accept.

The Reporter, M. Langlois, had discovered in the figures given to the Committee an error of eight centimes, of which the correction realised an economy of 13,000,000. The Bonapartists declared that this manner of finding fault in the accounts was an insult to the Army. The discussion was a lively one. M. Dréolle exclaimed that "the Army was above the laws." But he was sharply brought to book by President Grévy.

A few measures of economy, particularly the suppression of the allowance to officers on their way to Algeria and the refusal of the funds destined for military chaplaincies, provided matter for polemics.

At last that difficult moment was passed.

General Berthaut Minister for War.

After the vote of his Budget, General de Cissey tendered his resignation, which was accepted. He was replaced (15th August) by General Berthaut, whose name, agreeable to the Marshal, was favourably received by the public and by the Chambers.

The Government had witnessed rather than directed these debates. It was felt, it felt itself to be diminished and weakened. Caught between two fires, that is between two parties and the two Chambers, its existence held but by a thread. Yet the late season, fear of the morrow, a last feeling of respect, still arrested any decisive move. The holidays were approaching. The next session would be soon enough.

The Senate condoned the delay. The Marcère Bill on the appointment of mayors had been submitted to it on the 18th July, and was inscribed on the agenda for the 8th August, with M. de Parieu as Reporter. The discussion was opened in a spirit of compromise. In spite of the opposition of M. de Broglie, of M. Bocher, of M. Grivart, who proposed to leave the choice of the mayors to the Government on condition that they should not be chosen outside the Municipal Councils, after an eloquent speech from M. Jules Simon in favour of the Bill and a wise declaration from M. de Marcère, the Bill as a whole, slightly amended, was adopted by 176 votes against 89.

It was immediately discussed in the Chamber; the latter, on M. Jules Ferry's Report, accepted the changes proposed by the Senate "as a last and painful sacrifice."

This law which, with the law of University degrees, had been the political achievement of the Cabinet during the session, finally realised an agreement between the two Chambers, whilst the law on degrees opened a conflict. The Government machine might have worked, perhaps, if the religious question had not put it out of gear.

On the 12th August, M. Dufaure was elected a Life-Senator, in the place of M. Casimir-Perier, by 137 votes against 100 to M. Chesnelong.

On the same day, M. Dufaure in the Senate and M. de Marcère in the Chamber read the prorogation speeches. The unravelling of the tangle was postponed until after the holidays.

IV

The holidays were spent as usual, in the country, at the sea-side, in shooting. The business world was resting or enjoying itself. As for the political world, which never

rests, it went through the usual rites: banquets, public meetings, official tours, speeches!

Bye Elections.

A few elections took place: on the 20th August, at Mayenne, M. Bernard du Treil was elected a Senator; on the 27th August, (Morbihan) M. de Mun was re-elected; at Guingamp, M. Huon, a Republican, beat M. de Lucinge, whose election had been invalidated. On the 1st October, M. Ferrary, a Republican, was elected at Embrun, and another, M. Bertrand Milcent, at Cambrai; M. Peyrusse at Auch, and M. Tron at Saint-Gaudens. Bonapartists whose elections had been invalidated were re-elected; M. Petitbien, and M. Franck Chauveau, Republicans, were elected at Toul and Senlis. On the 12th and 19th November, M. Mestreau and M. T. Christophle, Republicans, were elected in the Charente-Inférieure and the Drôme, whilst in the Doubs, M. Février was beaten by M. de Mérode, a Conservative.

This made no appreciable difference in the situation; yet the Senate was being reinforced on the Right whilst the Chamber was gaining on the Left. Both majorities felt encouraged to hold their position.

Military Incidents.

Marshal MacMahon busied himself assiduously with the material and moral improvement of the Army. The latter was influenced by the political emotions which stirred the country. At the civil obsequies of Félicien David, the composer, the troops withdrew. Some officers, who had been invited to preside at some prize distributions, allowed themselves to deliver inflammatory speeches which provided "copy" for local newspapers. General Berthaut thought it well to outline a rule of conduct for the Army.

The Marshal-President reviewed some troops and directed some rifle manœuvres at the Châlons Camp on the 27th August. A Presidential decree of the 28th

September maintained the Commandants of Army Corps in their posts for a further period of three years. The Marshal was kind to his brother officers. But the Republic was watched over by great soldiers who had no love for it.

The President left Paris on the 5th September; he went to the manœuvres, in which the Reserve took part for the first time. In spite of a few isolated protests, Reservists had been enrolled without difficulty; the new Army was constituted. The manœuvres of the 8th and 14th Corps, commanded by Generals Bourbaki and Ducrot, took place in the neighbourhood of Lyons. The Marshal entered that city on the 9th September. His kindliness made him popular with the inhabitants, and in spite of a few cries of "Vive l'amnistie!" he was warmly welcomed at the Croix Rousse. From Lyons, the Marshal proceeded to Bourg, Lons-le-Saulnier, Poligny, Champagnole and Besançon. He was present at the manœuvres of the 7th Army Corps, commanded by the Duc d'Aumale . . . Ducrot, Bourbaki, Aumale . . . those names were very significant.

The President returned to Paris on the 14th September. On the 21st, he again left the Élysée to take part in the manœuvres of the 3rd and 4th Corps. He felt himself in his place, full of activity and authority, in the midst of the troops.

Religious incidents.

Many eyes were turned towards him. Mgr. Pie spoke on the 1st October, 1876, in the Cathedral of Reims on the occasion of the feast of St. Remi. He compared the Marshal, at the head of the true servants of France and of God, with King Clovis, marching at the head of his Franks. "Be bold, you who preside over the destinies of France," cried the Bishop, "and do not fear anything from the opinion of the true people. It is ready to follow you. The religion

of Christ has been, for fourteen centuries, the national religion, and it will remain so."

A sort of religious exaltation prevailed after the disappointment over the elections which succeeded the easy times of the National Assembly. The Government, in spite of President Dufaure's prudence, was constrained to act: a circular from the Keeper of the Seals repressed certain abuses in the acceptance of legacies in favour of religious institutions and of payment for ecclesiastical functions irregularly filled. Certain Bishops sought to moderate the militant ardour of the clergy and of the faithful. The Bishop of Gap published (November 1876) two pastoral letters, in which he recommended the clergy not to interfere in political matters, pointing out the danger of making of religion a "party flag."

At the same time, Mgr. Dupanloup founded the journal *La Défense Sociale et Religieuse.* Cardinal Guibert, Archbishop of Paris, put forward in opposition to the circular of the Keeper of the Seals, this theory that the Budget of Public Worship, representing as it did the income of the ecclesiastical property seized in 1792, was intangible.

France and Italy.

An incident provoked by Rome forced M. Dufaure, imbued with Gallican traditions, to show some firmness towards the Holy See. The Pope, in an Investiture Bull (26th June, 1876) which consecrated Mgr. Caverot as Archbishop of Reims, had asserted the right of the Holy See to divide, if need be, the vast diocese of Lyons-Vienne. Now, in virtue of the Concordat, such a measure could be taken but through an agreement with the French Government. M. Dufaure submitted to the President's signature a decree in virtue of which the Bull concerning the eventual division of the diocese would not be admitted in France or registered by the Conseil d'Etat.

In consequence of this incident, M. de Corcelle, Ambassador to the Holy See, tendered his resignation. Cardinal de Bonnechose saw the Marshal at the Élysée. As if to add to the Pope's difficulties, the French Government raised to the dignity of an Embassy the Legation accredited to the Court of Italy; the Minister, the Marquis de Noailles, was maintained in his post with the rank of Ambassador, and, in return, General Cialdini was appointed Italian Minister in Paris.

The Marshal poured his woes in the bosom of the Cardinal. "He deplored those measures, saying that he had been unable to prevent them, but that he remained firmly determined to defend the Army, the Magistracy, and the Clergy, those three bulwarks of social order." The Cardinal also saw M. Dufaure and the Duc Decazes. He found them full of what seemed to him excellent dispositions, but equally discouraged, disillusioned, and resigned. "The authority of the Government is very weak," said M. Dufaure. "Nobody has any authority," concludes the Cardinal.[1]

In public the Government assumed great optimism. M. de Marcère delivered a speech on the 20th August at Domfront: "The Republic is founded; it protects all serious interests in the country. It encourages the long-deferred hopes of which the poet speaks. . . . It has now the favour of Providence, who, after having, in terrible circumstances, placed its birth under the auspices of an illustrious patriot, reserved for it, in the person of M. le Maréchal de MacMahon, the noblest example of loyalty, of civic and military courage, the very type of French honour. . . ." A most lyrical effusion!

Republican Speeches.

At Republican banquets—M. Louis Blanc on the 22nd September, M. Naquet on the 24th—some distrust was manifested. M. Naquet went

[1] Mgr. Besson, *Vie du Cardinal de Bonnechose*, vol. ii., p. 233.

back to the "Jacobin programme between 1792 and Thermidor." "Including the guillotine?" asked his adversaries.

M. Gambetta set matters straight in a speech made at Belleville on the 27th October. Before an audience, rebellious at first and then carried away by the warmth of his words and the strength of his convictions, he pronounced an apology of the policy of compromise. He called the Commune a "criminal insurrection." He made reservations as to the Amnesty campaign, and, on that question, defended the policy somewhat disdainfully nicknamed *opportunist;* he defined that policy once again: "It consists in only going thoroughly into a question when it is certain that one is backed by the majority of the country. But when there is some hesitation, when the country has not manifested its will, when a measure is not agreeable to it, when the adoption of that measure is likely to be a cause of weakness and ruin for the Government, whatever be our ardour, I resist, and I shall always resist. . . . In presence of the unheard-of recrudescence of reactionary passions, I consider that prudence, circumspection and the coherent union of all shades of the Republican party have never been more necessary. The enemy appears everywhere, swallows up everything under the clerical mask; and that is the moment chosen to divide the Republican party! It is an impiety!"

This apostrophe was intended for the most hot-headed among the Left, but also for the prudent men of the Centre. Gambetta had not forgotten his failure to organise general meetings, and now pointed to the first consequences of that failure.

Social questions were taken up again. As early as the 23rd June, M. Laroche-Joubert, a Bonapartist Deputy, had questioned the Government "as to the investigations

that were being made with á view to arrive at a moral and material improvement of the fate of the greatest number." "In this Assembly and in the preceding one," he said, "there has been much talk of *politics*. But what about the social problem? Shall we or shall we not concern ourselves about the working classes?" The trap was obvious. M. Dufaure answered evasively, on orthodox lines. M. Laroche-Joubert moved a resolution (10th July) favouring the development of Co-operation.

On the 4th July, M. Édouard Lockroy, taking up a motion already submitted to the National Assembly, drafted another proposition for the legal recognition, organisation and working of unions either of employers or labourers. The social idea was on its way.

A Labour Congress.

On the 3rd of October, the first Labour Congress since the Commune was to take place in Paris. The Radical paper *La Réforme* had initiated it, the expenses were covered by M. Crémieux. A meeting of the Internationale had been held at the Hague in 1872, when Marx had broken with Bakounine; another Congress had taken place at Geneva in 1873. Now it was thought safe to meet in Paris.

The Congress comprised 255 Paris delegates, 105 from the provinces; 101 unions, of which 30 were from the provinces, and 46 local unions were represented.

The general tone was quite moderate. "An enormous section of the population," said the organisers of the Congress, "thirsts for reforms and desires to obtain more remunerative labour and complete rights of association and remuneration, but only by legal and pacific means. Revolutionary theories only come from sham labourers, paid by the enemies of the Republic. . . ." The co-operative idea was not supported. It was decided to found a Socialist organ, the *Prolétaire*, managed and edited by the members and delegates of Parisian Labour Unions,

MM. Prudent Dervilliers, Adhémar Leclerc, Paulard, Ribanier, Chabert, Joffrin, Labusquière. A delegation was appointed to come into direct touch with the Deputies Lockroy and Martin Nadaud, who were specially interested in Labour questions. At the same time, a watchmaker delegate asked to "have done with ambitious politicians who merely use the people to serve their own ends," and he caused the principle of labour candidatures to be carried unanimously.

The *bourgeois* Press showed much consideration for this wise Congress.[1]

The Chambers met in extraordinary session on Monday, the 30th October. The weather was dull, the Legislators irritable. The least incident might bring about a storm. The political world was nervous and uncontrolled. There was no harmony, no authority, no confidence left.

French Policy in the East.

On the second day of the session, the Duc Decazes read in the Chamber a declaration asserting the pacific part played by France in the grave complications which were taking place in the East.[2]

Then men rushed, head foremost, into the religious and political conflict which had been suspended but not appeased by the holidays. The Amnesty question remained a burning one. In spite of the regular publication of long lists of pardons, published in the *Officiel* during the holidays, in spite of the Presidential letter of the 27th June which effectually put an end to prosecutions, the Left was not yet satisfied.

M. Gatineau proposed to sanction the cessation of

[1] See Bourdeau, *L'Évolution du Socialisme*, p. 259; Winterer, *Le Socialisme Contemporain;* Paul Louis, *Les Étapes du Socialisme.*

[2] The events which brought about the Russo-Turkish War, and the war itself, will be studied as a whole in the fourth volume of the present work.

prosecutions by legislative means (3rd November). The principal clause of the Gatineau motion was that which transferred proceedings from courts-martial to a jury. M. Dufaure opposed this transfer. Gambetta answered M. Dufaure. The system of pardons was working too slowly; the cessation of prosecutions was not proclaimed clearly enough to have an efficacious result. A law was necessary: "Something must be done in answer to the very pressing general wish."

A confused debate began on a medley of Bills and counter Bills. Discussions dragged, ceased and began again. At last, the difficulty took shape in a motion of M. Houyvet, reported by M. Lisbonne, which was carried by the Chamber. It accorded the benefit of prescription to all the facts connected with the Commune which had not yet been the object of a prosecution, with the exception of accusations of murder, arson, or criminal thefts.

Prescription was also granted to all persons against whom prosecutions had only been begun. Clause III.—the important clause—decided that individuals excepted by the preceding clauses would be brought before competent Assize Courts, according to the provisions of the common law, instead of before courts-martial. Clause III. was carried by 244 votes against 242. The Ministers had voted against it.

The Bill would have to be submitted to the Senate.

The Left of the Chamber was determined to go straight on without procrastination or consideration. The Government was powerless; the Moderate Lefts were silent. Gambetta, though ill-pleased at heart, followed the movement.

The Budget Committee, of which he was chairman, had appointed, on the 4th April, a special Sub-Committee, composed of MM. Gambetta, Cochery, Proust, Guyot,

and Le Pomellec, charged with the duty of preparing a report on taxation reform. The report, presented by Gambetta to the Budget Committee, suggested a diminution of indirect taxation, and advised that the question of income-tax be boldly tackled. The Committee proposed to replace the four contributions by a general taxation of income, divided into four schedules, including in particular French and foreign *rentes*, life annuities, etc. The profits from that reform would permit a decrease of taxation on salt, slow goods traffic, chicory, oils, soaps, paper, candles, vinegars, and, later on, on sugars, telegrams, letters, wines, alcohols, etc. M. Haentjens had demanded a programme. Here was one!

Income-tax.

M. Léon Say, speaking at the Committee, hastened to reassure easily alarmed "interests." "Nothing is more dangerous than to upset the whole financial system from top to bottom, by plans which are too vast or not sufficiently considered. The true course to follow is to proceed by partial reforms, subordinating relief from taxation to economies or realised surplus. Any complete remodelling of the system is a redoubtable chimera." Gambetta maintained the propositions of the special Sub-Committee; they were adopted by the Budget Committee (26th–31st October). The Government was once more held in check.[1]

The discussion of the 1877 Budget, which was resumed in public sittings on Monday, the 6th November, was to fill the cup of bitterness. A brisk debate on the Colonial Budget brought to light regrettable abuses in the administrative management (affair of the *Société des Comores*). Admiral Fourichon, Naval Minister, was on the point of tendering his resignation.

[1] In fact, the Budget Committee did not submit to the Chamber the report of the Sub-Committee. Besides, Gambetta said in his report, "We merely wish to indicate for the present the road to be followed by our successors."

The Embassy to the Vatican.

On the subject of the Foreign Affairs Budget, M. Tirard demanded the suppression of the credit attributed to the French Embassy to the Vatican. The Duc Decazes, who defended this credit, was coldly received. Gambetta subordinated the solution of the question to that of the maintenance of the Concordat. The debate was a painful one. The amendment, supported by M. Madier de Montjau, was lost by 363 votes against 85. Skirmishes, which generally ended in the Cabinet's defeat, took place slowly and acrimoniously, on the subjects of the Budget for the Interior, Algeria, the Justice department. Yet those Budgets were carried. *A propos* of the National Printing Budget, the contract entered into by the Broglie Cabinet with M. Dalloz for the publication of the *Moniteur des Communes* was broken, against M. Dufaure's opinion. M. Floquet, when the Legion of Honour Budget came up, raised the question of funeral honours. The War Minister was detained at the Senate. In spite of M. Dufaure, the Chamber adjourned the question and suspended the sitting, which meant that it claimed an explanation from the Cabinet.

The Left *bureaux* took the affair in hand and announced that they were awaiting a Bill modifying the Messidor Decree. On the 23rd, M. de Marcère, "with a smile on his lips and confidence in his eyes," brought in the Bill. The Government was of opinion that such questions produce polemics likely to perturb consciences: it proposed to alter nothing in what concerned the question of funeral honours rendered to the military dead, and to suppress them for civilians who were members of the Legion of Honour.

Public Worship.

This rather simple Bill was received by the Left with surprise, even with amazement. Urgency was demanded and voted. It was decided to postpone the matter until the next day, so as to give time for the appointment of a Committee. Agitation

prevailed. It was under that impression, that the discussion of the Public Worship Budget was opened; the general tone of it can well be imagined. M. Charles Boysset would simply delete this Budget (24th November). M. Bernard Lavergne demanded "the substitution of State Ethics for Church Ethics." The *Syllabus* was mentioned. Prince Jerome Napoleon denounced the "clerical influences . . . which caused the loss of Alsace and Lorraine." At this point, good M. Keller could not contain his indignation: "The previous speaker has less than any one the right to reawaken such painful memories, for he bears a name written in letters of blood in the palpitating flesh of Alsace and of Lorraine. . . ." Phrases and speeches were interrupted by cries and tumult. Gambetta ascended the tribune and spoke in the midst of the noise of the "clerical fanaticism which animated the Spanish woman who had been made the Empress of the French." This produced a terrible conflict of applause and protests from the Left and the Right. M. Grévy called the speaker to order. The Chamber was let loose.

M. Raoul Duval played a conciliatory part. "We must learn to control ourselves sufficiently to forget ourselves and to think of our country." But M. Madier de Montjau said that one could not speak too much of the *Coup d'Etat* and of the proscriptions of December. The Budget was left far behind.

Further discussion was adjourned to the next day. The Committee appointed to consider the Bill on funeral honours was hostile to the Marcère Bill. The Cabinet, opposed by the Senate, was no longer backed by the Chamber.

M. Dufaure on the Religious Question.

The Boysset amendment was discussed, suppressing the Budget of Public Worship. M. Dufaure threw himself into the breach. He spoke according to his conscience, according to

his feelings, which were at the same time Liberal and Catholic. This was the real Ministerial declaration on that burning subject; his speech marks the place of his Cabinet before the Chamber and before History: "I speak in the name of the Government as a whole: we wish to be perfectly respectful towards religion; we are convinced that it is no proof of a strong mind to attack and to offend it; but we will never forget that we are the representatives of public powers in France, and, whatever may be our religious convictions, we will at no price sacrifice one of the elements of public power which have been entrusted to us; otherwise we should be traitors to our country. . . . I speak as if I feared a struggle on that subject. I do not. We sincerely respect the spiritual power, and we find in the spiritual power a sincere respect for our temporal power; and, if ever conflicts should arise, I hold a firm confidence that good relations, amicable negotiations and sometimes—allow me to say so—an intervention from the Holy See would contribute to appease those conflicts, and we should find no resistance on the part of those wise and distinguished prelates of whom the French Episcopate is composed at present. It is with such a prudent but firm conduct that we shall, I hope, reconcile men's minds to two things very dear to us, though some would part them; Religion and the Republic."

Those moderate words were applauded, but the agitation continued. The sitting was suspended. The incident emphasised the breach between the Advanced Lefts and the President of the Council.

M. Boysset was not satisfied. He protested. His amendment was lost by 432 votes against 62.

Fresh debates started on each chapter of the Budget of Public Worship, which was fought step by step. Hasty words were exchanged between M. Dufaure and

the Reporter, M. Wilson, whom Gambetta finally disowned in the name of the Committee. M. Dufaure sank back into the collar of his frock-coat. He scarcely intervened any more, and was beaten whenever he did so; beaten on the St. Denis Chapter, on Seminary scholarships, on diocesan buildings in Algeria.

In fact the Cabinet lost all interests, and the Budget of Worship was voted, not according to the Government's demands, but according to the proposals of the Committee. M. Haentjens exclaimed: "There is no Government!" (30th November).

M. Chesnelong a Life-Senator.

The last blow was to be dealt by the Senate. On the 24th November, the Right and the Left of the Upper Chamber had come into conflict once again, on the election of two Life-members to replace MM. Letellier-Valazé and Wolowski, deceased. The candidates of the Right were M. Chesnelong and General Vinoy, and those of the Left MM. Renouard and André. M. Chesnelong, the Frohsdorf negotiator, the lay chief of French Catholics, the ex-deputy for Orthez, beaten at the last election, was elected a Life-Senator by 147 votes, after two ballots. M. Renouard was elected after three ballots by 140 votes. The election of M. Chesnelong and that of M. Buffet, those two pieces of wreckage left behind the rushing stream, assumed, in the eyes of the Left majority in the Chamber, the appearance of a provocation.

On the 1st December, the Upper Chamber opened the discussion on the Bill, already carried by the Chamber, which related to prosecutions subsequent to the Commune. The Committee and its Reporter, M. Paris, accepted the Bill, but rejected Clause III., transferring the trials from courts-martial to civil courts. Urgency was declared. General Changarnier, hostile to the Bill, opened the debate. M. Bertauld, of the Left Centre,

proposed a counter Bill, which was none other than a paraphrase of the Presidential letter of the 27th June. M. Dufaure was in a singularly difficult situation, having taken upon himself the task of defending in the Senate a Bill voted in the Chamber in spite of his own opposition. But was not the Cabinet before everything an organ of conciliation between the two Chambers?

M. Dufaure explained himself with a detached air, but very clearly. He was opposed to the conclusions of the Committee and leaned toward the Bertauld counter Bill. "We cannot complain," said he, "if the Chambers consent to adhere to the principles which are set out in the letter of the President of the Republic. We would look upon the vote of the Bertauld amendment as upon a legislative reproduction of the Marshal's letter, and, though the Bill does not emanate from the Government, though the Government is firmly resolved to execute the letter of the President, whatever be the fate of the Bill, nevertheless I must not conceal the fact that the Government would prefer that the Bertauld amendment should be adopted rather than rejected."

This was a narrow plank, but one which might perhaps allow the Cabinet to pass and afterwards to try to obtain the adhesion of the Chamber. Could good-will and abnegation be carried farther?

The Left and the Centre supported the Cabinet. M. Paris rejected the amendment in the name of the Committee and of the Right, but added: "We are not your adversaries; we are your allies. We defend with you the policy which you defended in the Chamber. . . ." And this was true. But there are different ways of doing things!

A vote was taken. By 148 votes against 134, the Senate decided *not to enter into the discussion of the clauses.* The Bill was lost and the Bertauld amendment with it.

Fall of the Dufaure Cabinet.

After the vote was over, a member of the Right Centre, bound to M. Dufaure by the ties of a long friendship, came to his bench, and said to him, with an anxious air, "You are not going to leave us, are you, for a little thing like that?"

"That little thing overthrows me, my good friend," answered the President of the Council. He said it quite without bitterness, with the kindly and malicious smile of a philosopher who has packed his boxes.[1]

That same evening, M. Dufaure announced his departure to his colleagues.

[1] J. Ferry, vol. ii., p. 296.

CHAPTER IX

THE JULES SIMON CABINET AND THE 16TH MAY

I. Reasons for the fall of the Dufaure Ministry.—Last efforts to bring about the Union of the Centres.—Ministerial Crisis.—The Jules Simon Ministry.—M. Jules Simon and the Chamber.—Cold reception from the Left.—M. Jules Simon and M. Gambetta.—The financial rights of the Senate.—The 1877 Budget voted.

II. First act of the Cabinet.—The Administrative *Personnel.*—Reopening of the Session.—Momentary calm.—Policy of the Left Centre.—Gambetta re-elected Chairman of the Budget Committee.—Tactics of the Extreme Left.—Difficult position of M. Jules Simon.—Ministerial Incidents.—Republican Programme.

III. The religious question.—Pope Pius IX and M. Jules Simon.—Easter Holidays.

IV. Interpellation concerning Ultramontane intrigues.—Speeches from MM. Jules Simon and Gambetta.

V. The Marshal decides to break with the Left Majority.—The Municipal Organisation Law and the Press Law.—The letter of the 16th May.—Resignation of the Cabinet.—The "President's Policy."

I

Letter of M. Dufaure to the Marshal.

ON the next day, 2nd December, 1875, M. Dufaure addressed to Marshal Mac-Mahon, President of the Republic, the following letter:

Versailles, 2nd December, 1876.

MONSIEUR LE PRÉSIDENT,

I was not more fortunate yesterday, at the Senate, than I had been at the Chamber of Deputies. My resignation has become absolutely necessary. The difficulty, however, is fortunately an entirely personal one. It need not prevent my colleagues from continuing the task to which they are devoting themselves. I have the honour, Monsieur le Président, of handing you my resignation. I will continue to direct the work of my

department until my successor is appointed. I shall never forget, Monsieur le Président, the proofs of esteem and confidence which you have kindly given me for the last two years.—I beg you to accept the assurance, etc., etc.

M. Dufaure's letter clearly explained the reasons for his fall. Caught between the Chamber and the Senate, he could no longer govern. The attempt in which he had joined failed; the Presidency of the Republic, such as the law of the 20th November had instituted it, was not adapted to the Parliamentary *régime*, such as the Constitution had established it.

The majority of the Chamber had not lent itself to the policy of compromise or to the policy towards the Élysée which M. Dufaure had thought well to follow. Neither would the majority of the Senate help in the work of conciliation which the first Republican Premier had attempted. By making Life-Senators of M. Buffet and M. Chesnelong, both rejected by popular suffrage —the one, head of the Government beaten on the 20th February, the other, the notorious leader of lay clericalism—it divided the popular Chamber and created a conflict.

The difficulty lay rather in the institutions than in the individuals. Assuredly Marshal MacMahon was lacking in suppleness, but his good faith was unquestioned. The majority of the country was not hostile to him. There was in him the making of a good Parliamentary President.

On the other hand, in spite of occasional imprudence, the majority of the Chamber was not "ungovernable." The Republican party included a considerable number of moderate and prudent men. These men gathered willingly enough around Marshal MacMahon and would have supported a Conservative policy, under the one condition that it should be a Republican policy.

But this group, not being sufficiently numerous to constitute a majority in itself, could not leave out of account the other groups of the Left, and, since it desired to remain Parliamentary at any price, it was inevitable that, sooner or later, the weak point in the Constitution should appear, and that the latent Monarchism which had been left in it by the consecration of the Septennate should come into opposition with the principle of the Sovereignty of the People, on which the Constitution rested.

A Government of Public Opinion tolerates no obscurities or complexities—even at the risk of a crisis, all resistance must give way before the invincible penetration of Light.

In fact, the very strength and authority of the Moderate party contributed towards the fall of M. Dufaure and the events which followed it.

Situation of the Moderate Party.

The Moderate party, proud of the great personalities which illustrated it, thought that it had done enough for the Republic when it founded it. It had founded it in conformity with M. Thiers' famous words, "the Republic must be Conservative or nothing;" "a Republic without Republicans." This programme was realised by the accession to power of the Left Centre; it now considered that the other groups, grateful for its fidelity, could not prove their gratitude more judiciously, more equitably, than by maintaining it wholly and indefinitely in authority. A man of wit, closely connected with those events, M. Allain-Targé, writes, speaking of a somewhat later period: "Since 1875, the Moderates had acquired under M. Dufaure and Marshal MacMahon, habits which were sweet to them. Nothing could be more agreeable to them than to be forced upon the Marshal by public opinion, and to possess the support of real Republicans,

of Democrats of all shades, without having to do anything in return but to keep Clericals and Monarchists apart from all affairs." . . . This division between the groups had already been the cause of difficulties. Gambetta had tried in vain to gather together that impalpable dust. He had been met with resistance from the leaders of the Left Centre and of the Right, who feared to associate, under the preponderating influence of this powerful orator, with the men of the *Union Républicaine*, more ardent, bolder, better known in the party through their brilliant former services, who would have taken from them at least a portion of the ruling authority."[1]

M. de Marcère praises that which M. Allain-Targé blames: "Independently of the rôle which their personal worth secured for the members of the Left Centre, this group had what might be called 'a public opinion part.' There is no doubt that they alone could at that time bring to the Republic the assent of the country. . . . It has been said that the Left ridiculed the ingenuousness of the Left Centre, and that it was somewhat cavalierly known as the 'third horse' to be dispensed with at the top of the hill. . . . But, in reality, the Left Centre cared little. . . . It sought nothing but its own goal and pursued nothing else. . . ."

Those divisions were not merely made manifest by the instability of the majority; they exerted a remarkable counter-influence on the tendencies of the Right and of the Élysée; they encouraged and authorised hopes and illusions which kept up a spirit of pugnacity and resistance.

Hopes of the Right.

The former Right of the National Assembly, ever present and watchful in the Marshal's *entourage*, thought that the last word had not been said, and that sooner or later, under pressure of

[1] *Revue de Paris*, 1905, p. 151.

events, men would return to a policy of union of the Centres which would bring about, once for all, the dislocation of the Republican majority.

It did not seem unlikely that M. Thiers, M. Dufaure, M. Grévy, would end by tiring of their Radical allies, and by seeking more exalted alliances, from which some strange perversion of taste had momentarily withdrawn them.

The repentant Left Centre would give up those low acquaintances and fall back upon the Conservative party, who would then merely decide whether to welcome the Prodigal Son. With the support of the Senate and of the Presidency, an invincible Government majority would be formed. Therein lay salvation.

That might in fact have happened: the Left Centre often grew frightened at the immoderation of the advanced Republicans. But the leaders of the Right, by waiting for that moment and counting upon it, committed a tactical error analogous to that which had already deceived them in their relations with the Extreme Right. They were too sure of themselves and thought their assistance too indispensable; they took too haughty a tone. "There were no relations, no communications between the parties, except in the open struggles in the Parliament," says M. de Marcère again. "Men never met except on the battle-field, and, even on that ground, there never was any question of compromise. A sort of false honour, born of the vivacity and sincerity of our convictions, put us all on our guard against a manifest desire for an understanding and against attempts at compromise which would have been considered treason. . . . The same spirit of exclusion and ill-humour reigned, or rather raged, in Society. The world which frequented the Élysée, the spirit which prevailed there and which could be felt from the ante-chamber, through the high officials' offices, to the

drawing-rooms, made of it a sort of camp, hostile to the Republic."

The Left Centre found in the Right nothing but haughtiness, coldness, and contempt: men are but men after all! . . .

Therefore, in the game which was being played it remained bound to the mass of the Republican party. However, the Right wondered at the time of M. Dufaure's fall whether the opportunity had not come when, in the face of this new crisis, the Left Centre should begin its evolution and seek to come nearer to the other side.

Council of Ministers.

On the 2nd December, in the morning, a meeting of the Council of Ministers took place at which M. Dufaure was present. He confirmed the resolve which his letter had announced to the Marshal. His resignation was made public by a communication to the Havas Agency. The Chambers were sitting, but in a tumult. M. de Marcère withdrew his Bill on Funeral Honours. "This is desertion," cried M. Prax-Paris. A motion by M. Laussedat, of the Left, was accepted by MM. de Marcère and Léon Say, who announced, at least as far as they were concerned, the intention of the Cabinet to remain inclined towards the Left. It was less a question of a change of Government than of a few changes in the Cabinet. At the end of the year, with the Budget not yet voted, in the midst of threatening international complications in the East, was it a time to touch upon the difficulty which lay at the bottom of the debate, that of Ministerial and Parliamentary independence against Presidential authority?

The Lefts seemed determined to hurry matters. The Left Centre met on the 3rd December, and unanimously voted a motion according to which "independently of any personal question, the support of the group would only

be given to a Cabinet resolved to appoint an administrative and judicial *personnel* in harmony with the spirit of the majority born of the elections of the 20th February." This decision was confirmed by a meeting of the *bureaux* of the three Left groups. M. Jules Ferry, in his powerful manner, emphasised it thus: "The President of the Republic must be made to understand that, for the last nine months, he has gone beyond his powers by refusing his signature to the proposals of his Cabinet, by setting up in opposition to the Constitution and responsible Cabinet the occult action of a secret Cabinet . . . perpetuating, against the regular working of Parliamentary institutions, the tendencies of the 24th May. For the last nine months, the President of the Republic, assisted by unknown collaborators, has disputed the nominations of M. de Marcère, criticised the choice of mayors, fought for a *sous-préfet*, and defended M. Buffet's *préfets*, as he defended the bulwarks of Malakoff. It is now time to correct and to abolish a system introduced under M. Ricard, sanctioned by the silence and encouraged by the inertia of M. Dufaure, and vainly fought by M. de Marcère."[1]

Gambetta said, "The Chamber must be followed or dissolved."

Such was the thesis; now for the anti-thesis: "It is an error," writes a familiar friend of the President, "to attribute the responsibility of the actions of Marshal MacMahon to what has been called the *Camarilla*. Those who have lived in intimate intercourse with the Marshal, know that no one had any influence upon his mind. He never asked for advice from his surroundings, he accepted it but from men who owed to their functions the right of giving it. Appointed by the Conservatives, the Marshal considered himself entrusted with the defence

[1] Jules Ferry, vol. ii., p. 301.

of their interests, and his loyalty refused to become the accomplice of their defeat. This conception was not in conformity with the direct rules of the Parliamentary *régime*, but how is the working of Parliamentarism, as it exists under an hereditary Monarch, to be conciliated with the system of an elected chief whose nomination by the Chambers was the triumph of a party and the defeat of the adverse party? It would be asking too much of a soldier to force him to solve the problem of which the cleverest politicians, before or after him, have never found the solution."[1]

The Marshal hesitated. Should he accede to the injunctions of the Parliamentary majority and give way, once for all, or should he, with the support of the Rights and of the Senate, attempt a policy of resistance?

The President of the Republic, inaugurating a practice constantly followed since then, sent for the Presidents of the two Chambers, the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier and M. Jules Grévy. He asked them to constitute the Cabinet. An Audiffret-Pasquier–Casimir-Perier combination, contemplated for a moment, died before its birth. There were special difficulties within the general difficulty.

General Berthaut, War Minister, was bound on the question of funeral honours in contradiction with the tendencies of the majority. The Duc Decazes was being violently attacked on the subject of foreign affairs by M. Thiers and by M. Gambetta. Besides, there was some coldness between the Duc Decazes and M. Léon Say. The question of Egyptian finance came to the surface again. It was considered that M. Léon Say was hostile to M. de Soubeyran, of the *Crédit Foncier*, whilst the Duc Decazes supported him.

Either on the Right or the Left, the Marshal fell into inextricable difficulties; on the Right, resistance and

[1] Private unpublished document.

conflict; on the Left, surrender to the majority, to M. Gambetta. Would no one free him from this dilemma?

After a few days' marking time, he came back to M. Dufaure and asked him to reconstitute the Cabinet; he authorised him, if necessary, to make overtures to M. Jules Simon. The latter declared that he was too much attached to M. Thiers and too much opposed to the Marshal to accept. For three days, this possible solution was contemplated; the Marshal persisted in pressing M. Dufaure. The culminating point of the crisis was reached.

The Jules Simon solution.

M. Dufaure did what he could, but did not succeed. No confidence was established either on the Right or on the Left. His colleagues decided to retire with him.

On the evening of the 9th December, Marshal MacMahon called a Council of Ministers. M. Dufaure was not present: he had written to the Marshal in the morning to explain the situation.

Council of Ministers.

Versailles, 9th December, 1876.

MONSIEUR LE PRÉSIDENT,

I called on you to render an account of the discussion which we have had at the Ministry of Justice. I shall have the honour of seeing you on Tuesday at Versailles. For the present, I accomplish the mission given me by my colleagues by handing you their resignation and my own. . . .

In another letter, dated on the same day in the afternoon, M. Dufaure apologised for not being present at the Council meeting, and he expressed his opinion as to the constitution of the future Cabinet:—

Versailles, 9th December, 6 p.m.

MONSIEUR LE PRÉSIDENT,

I am weary: I beg you to excuse me if I do not come to Paris this evening. Allow me to remind you:—that I could not accept the Presidency of the Council without a portfolio; that I am ready to give up the Ministry of Public Worship to M. Bardoux if desired; that I am not in the least opposed to seeing M. Jules Simon have a place in the Cabinet, and finally, that, if my colleagues resign, I cannot undertake to form a Cabinet without them.

Believe me, etc.

Marshal MacMahon read M. Dufaure's letter to the Council and stated his own opinion. He spoke simply and gravely, but more lengthily than usual. After the Council meeting, wishing to make his line of conduct and the responsibilities which he assumed absolutely clear, he dictated an account of the words he had used to his Ministers. Here is this document:[1]

9th December, 1876.

Speech of Marshal MacMahon.

The situation in which we are placed is a grave and painful one. I will state it to you, as I see it, with entire frankness. You know that I did not desire power, that I did not conspire to attain it; but I now hold it in virtue of the decision of a Sovereign Assembly and I am determined to keep it, because I foresee the grave consequences which would follow my retreat. Those consequences would be a meeting of the Congress and a revision of this Constitution, of which my presence in authority can alone secure the maintenance. It would almost surely mean the suppression of the Senate, which you all here consider as a necessary part of the machinery. It would be the Convention made legal.

I therefore retain the Presidency of the Republic, not from taste nor from ambition, but, I assert it, in the sole interest of the country. Since I have held it, I am conscious of never having been guided by personal feelings. At this moment, more than ever, my conduct is dictated by considerations of a public character. Let us, therefore, examine our position. I will not speak here of the more or less irregular, more or less Revolutionary proceedings adopted in the last four days by the Chamber of Deputies, in order to influence our decisions. I will limit myself to pointing out the conditions to which the leaders of the majority wish to subordinate the formation of the Cabinet. These are the *replacement* of General Berthaut and the *displacement* of M. Dufaure.

The first point touches me personally, and, on this point, I cannot give way. I am responsible for the reorganisation of our military forces. Is it admissible that the soldier associated with me in this task should be submitted to the incessant fluctuations of politics? A great deal of time is required to make a War Minister conversant with the numerous questions embraced by his administration. If he should be exposed to frequent changes, our common work would be hampered and compromised. It is suggested that I should replace General Berthaut by the Head of the Staff,

[1] On this manuscript, which I owe to the kindness of M. le Vicomte E. d'Harcourt, are written these words:—"This note was dictated to me by the Marshal after the Council meeting. Speech delivered by him at the meeting." At the same time, M. Léon Say also dictated an account of the meeting and of the words uttered by Marshal MacMahon.

who is accustomed to the business, and thus avoid the jar which I fear. To this I answer: The Head of the Staff has his own functions, and the Minister has his; two men, each with distinct attributes, are not too many to bring such an arduous task to a satisfactory conclusion. You are acquainted with our situation abroad. In the last four years, as M. Decazes will tell you, we have often been threatened; until now we have succeeded in avoiding a war; but who can answer whether, very soon, to-morrow perhaps, it will not come suddenly? And if, for political or personal questions, we allowed our forces to weaken, our chances to diminish, the country would not forgive us, and me less than another, for it is upon me that the responsibility would fall! I should be reminded of that article of the Constitution which gives me the right of nomination for all the situations in the Army. I should be eternally accused of having, through culpable weakness, compromised the security of the country.

Moreover, General Berthaut has always remained a stranger to politics. I chose him outside any party and he has remained so. At the beginning, he was favourably received. When did the attacks upon him begin? On the day when he maintained in their places the heads of the Army Corps, a measure which I considered a necessary one, and with which you agreed. Since then, the question of funeral honours has come up again. The General has not diverged from you, he consented to the introduction of a Bill of which he was not the author; he placed himself on your ground, and, when he spoke, not in the Chamber but in the Committee, spoke in your name and in agreement with you. At any cost, for those reasons, I will keep General Berthaut.

Now for the second point which should occupy us. It is desired that the Ministry of Justice should be taken away from M. Dufaure, leaving him the Presidency without a portfolio. It is not by me, but by M. Dufaure himself, that this condition is refused; he does not consider it possible to agree to a clause which implies blame on his past conduct and which, in the future, would have the consequence of bringing about a profound modification of the judicial *personnel*. He does not consider that he ought to sanction, by his presence in the Cabinet, under any title whatever, measures which he refuses to approve. You know what those measures are. I was saying just now that the real motive of the attacks directed against General Berthaut, is the maintenance, at the head of our Army, of those superior officers whose experience and talent are valuable. Similar reproaches are addressed to M. Dufaure. He is asked to discharge judicial functionaries. The very principle of Life-Magistracy is attacked. M. Dufaure refuses to do so. I can but support him. We have both made every effort, we have consented to many sacrifices, in order to arrive at the constitution of a Cabinet capable of securing a majority in the Chamber. Not later than yesterday, we decided to offer the Ministry of the Interior to M. Jules Simon. I made this concession for the sake of M. Dufaure. I cannot give him a greater proof of the confidence I have in him and of my desire to keep him.[1]

[1] There is more in the analysis of M. Léon Say: "I have not conspired to obtain the power and I bring no questions of honour into politics,

Moreover, be not mistaken as to my feelings. You might believe that I feel some repugnance in introducing into my Councils a man who poses as my personal enemy. It is not so. What M. Jules Simon said of me in a celebrated speech, with which he has been reproached by my friends, I understand and I approve, and I think, as he does, that I do not enjoy the prestige which would surround the Comte de Chambord if a majority, however weak, should give him back the Crown. I think, as he does, that I cannot pretend to the authority which the Comte de Paris would exert if circumstances should give him the power. And, when he declares that my feeble services cannot be compared with the renown and genius of Napoleon, again I agree with him.

It is, however, not for those appreciations, very just ones, I think, that I have any feeling against him. No, but let me say it frankly, the past of this statesman, his participation—more or less real, but in any case apparent—in the insurrection of the 4th September, the theories which he used to profess, all those things alarm me, and you cannot be astonished at it. In spite of all, I recognise the talent and present moderation of M. Jules Simon, and I accept him at the hands of M. Dufaure, but with certain conditions which are as important to M. Dufaure as to myself. He must reject M. Gambetta's doctrines on the omnipotence of the Chamber; he must recognise the independence of the President of the Republic within the limitations traced by the Constitution. Finally, he must promise not to test officials according to their opinions, but only to strike those who have failed in their professional duty or in the respect which they owe to the Constitution.

I am told that, if the old Cabinet cannot be reconstituted, there are other possible Cabinets, other leaders to whom you can appeal. Where are they? A man has been mentioned for whom I have always felt a personal sympathy, and who is both influential and honoured by the Republican party.[1]

I will tell you why I cannot appeal to him. M. Gambetta sent him, three days ago, a Ministerial list, at the head of which stands his name, and after his name those of MM. Lepère and Le Royer. This same statesman recently offered me, on behalf of his friend, M. Gambetta, a *rendez-vous* in the Bois de Boulogne. Well! would you advise me to accept a Cabinet at the hands of M. Gambetta, a Cabinet of which he would be the patron, the occult President? As for me, I could not do so.

I was interrupted just now with the suggestion of another name, the name of one of the present Ministers, M. Léon Say. I render full justice to the talent, the rare financial capacity shown by M. Léon Say in the direction of his ministry, but M. Léon Say shares the opinions of M. Dufaure, he comes

---

but the majority of the Chamber is not the country. I do all I can to govern with the Left Centre, I have called to power the most important man in that group; only one man was more important than he is, and that is M. Thiers. I cannot make M. Thiers a Minister, I can but retire before him; I am willing to go further, I agree that an offer should be made to M. Jules Simon, etc. . . ."

[1] According to M. Léon Say this was M. Duclerc, Vice-President of the Senate.

from the same party, he belongs to the same group, he has followed almost the same policy. He will allow me to add that, in spite of his great financial reputation, he does not yet possess an experience equal to that of M. Dufaure; he does not yet enjoy the same authority.

A Ministry constituted under his Presidency would, therefore, be exposed to the same fate, and would fall perhaps even sooner before the like attacks.

However, in my eyes, if we wish to avoid extreme parties only one Cabinet is possible, that which I suggest. Will the Chamber of Deputies oppose it? If it opposes a Cabinet at the head of which is placed the most authorised representative of the Conservative Republic, a Cabinet of which each of the members has given constant hostages to the Liberal cause, which, in order to show its desire for reconciliation, has sought the assistance of a colleague whom the whole Republican party has always recognised as one of its leaders, if this is so, an accord is impossible. It will be an established fact that the Left wished to make a Cabinet without him, perhaps against him; that it takes no account of the tendencies of the Senate; that it has forgotten that three powers exist within the State, and that they can live but through reciprocal concessions.

As for me, I am conscious of having fulfilled my duty to the end, and of having consented to every sacrifice compatible with the security of the country. I shall never repent of having rejected assistance which, in my eyes, would harm the great interests which I must defend.

If the majority of the Chamber does not approve of my action, it will only remain for me to appeal to public opinion and to make the country judge between the Parliament and myself.

In conclusion, the Marshal asked the Ministers present if they were of an opinion that overtures should be made to M. Jules Simon. With the exception of M. Christophle, they considered the step an advantageous one. The Marshal announced that he would write to M. Dufaure. It was now late: the meeting broke up.

During those delays, the Chamber continued to sit; in the absence of the Ministers, the Budget was discussed. M. Jules Ferry had proposed, on the 7th December, that the discussion should be adjourned until after the formation of the Cabinet: the Chamber refused by 281 votes against 192. On the 9th December, by 342 votes against 145, the Chamber rejected a motion from M. Haentjens reiterating the proposal to adjourn, and agreed to sit on the 11th. M. Blin de Bourdon, at that same sitting, betrayed the anxiety which the obstinacy of the

Republican majority gave to the Right. "The object of this Parliamentary strike," he said, "of this Parliamentary coalition, is to enforce the exclusive will of the Chamber, deleting, as it were, from the Constitution the Senate and the President of the Republic; the means to do so consists in a threat of rejecting the Budget. Behind the Ministerial Crisis is concealed a Government Crisis. The resignation of the President of the Republic is secretly sought." Baron de St. Paul exclaimed, "This is the beginning of the Convention." All that meant that the Chamber, elected by Universal Suffrage, was watching over the right of Assemblies. The discussion of the Budget proceeded like a passage from a classical chorus, whilst the drama took place behind the scenes. M. Léon Say gave a clear and full statement of the financial situation. M. Menier drew up his project of a tax on capital and M. Rouvier demanded an income-tax.

M. Jules Simon at the Élysée.

"On the morning of the 10th," relates M. Jules Simon, "I was talking in my study with several of my friends, when a messenger from the Élysée came to tell me that the Marshal wished to see me. . . ." This was the sequel to the discussion which had taken place on the 9th. If M. de Meaux is to be believed, an important politician, a member of the Right, M. Audren de Kerdrel, had intervened to facilitate the very improbable *rapprochement* between the Marshal and M. Jules Simon: we know what price the Marshal attached to the maintenance of General Berthaut as Minister for War: "One day, during the ministerial crisis, I happened to be talking with Kerdrel in a lobby. Jules Simon passed us. He and Kerdrel, both Bretons, had been schoolfellows, and were on familiar terms. Kerdrel called him: 'Don't you want to be a Minister without having to command the Army?' 'Oh!' answered Jules Simon, in his caressing voice,

weighing his words, 'the difficulty is not there; I am not, like you, President of the Army Committee: I would willingly leave it to the Marshal and to whomever he liked.' These words were intended to be repeated. Kerdrel repeated them, they were carried to the Élysée, and Kerdrel was charged to offer to his old schoolfellow and constant adversary, the Presidency of the Council. When he arrived to fulfil his mission, on the fifth floor of the house in the Place de la Madeleine, where Jules Simon was lodged, he found him surrounded by his friends, who awaited, not without anxiety, the issue of the crisis. They feared that authority might escape them. They wished to remain in power under cover of the Marshal. The offer which Kerdrel brought relieved and rejoiced them. Simon himself did not conceal his satisfaction."[1]

M. Dufaure and M. Jules Simon.

The conversation which M. Dufaure, speaking in the name of the Marshal, had with M. Jules Simon did not altogether satisfy the retiring President. He wrote on the 10th December, the following letter to the Marshal:

Paris, 10th December, 1876.

MONSIEUR LE PRÉSIDENT,

I have had, since I saw you, a long conversation with M. Jules Simon. He was much touched by the advances which I made him with your assent. He would willingly enter into the Cabinet which you desire to form. He would take with him to the Ministry of the Interior the attitude of mind which you desire, but he does not wish to be bound unless the Cabinet has some chance of lasting.

He is persuaded that the combination which is offered to him would not hold for a day before the Chamber of Deputies. He says that the presence of General Berthaut will not be accepted when M. de Marcère retires; the question of Civil funerals will reappear immediately with all its danger; on the other hand, the Chamber expects more considerable changes in the composition of the Council. His name and that of M. Bardoux will not suffice if I remain at the Ministry of Justice. I do not accept, Monsieur le Président, this disguised condemnation of the magistracy and of the chief who has led it for four years, but, by resisting this blind prejudice, I see, and

[1] *Souvenirs Politiques*, p. 295.

it is intolerable to me to do so, that I should be an obstacle to your forming a Ministry within the moderate section where you wish to choose it. I therefore beg of you to consider my resignation as final.

You will kindly excuse me if I announce to you my determination by writing. It would be too painful to me to go and tell you by word of mouth that I can no longer help you in the difficult mission which you have to fulfil. . . .[1]

The intervention of M. de Kerdrel would tend to show that the choice of M. Jules Simon was not disagreeable to the leaders of the Right. The latter had had time to consider it. M. Emile de Girardin writes on the 11th May, 1877, that M. Jules Simon attained the Presidency of the Council of Ministers through two influences, "converging though contrary, that of M. Thiers and that of M. de Broglie."

It may be supposed at least that that choice, on the part of the Marshal, of a man who had so cruelly treated him in the speech of the 18th November, 1873, of a friend so intimate with and so devoted to M. Thiers, was to be explained especially by the resolution of the Marshal to have no relations, political or otherwise, with M. Gambetta. Gambetta was the President of the Budget Committee, the real leader of the majority. He had, by every means, public or confidential, tried to force his way into the Élysée. He had not succeeded. The Marshal had refused to see him, to receive him, or to accept from him any sort of advances, be it but a note or a communication. Everything that came from Gambetta was null and void. The Marshal made of the exclusion of the Left and of its leader, a question of conscience.

Gambetta and the Élysée.

M. Émile de Girardin soon afterwards noted this delicate point. He wrote in the *France* on the 27th January, 1877: "There is another solecism which the President ought to do away with: it is that which consists in not

[1] Private, unpublished document.

treating M. Gambetta with the consideration due to the President, twice elected, of the Budget Committee. This lack of courtesy stultifies the Parliamentary Government and should not be allowed to continue."

It is easy to guess, now, the impression made on a suspicious public by the choice of M. Jules Simon. M. de Girardin wrote a few days after the constitution of the Cabinet (24th January, 1877): "The plan of campaign is the following: to sow division between M. Jules Simon and M. Léon Say; to cause the latter to overthrow the former so as to be able, on the next day, to cry loudly: 'You see that a Republic by Republicans is impossible! . . .'"

In reality the object was above that question of persons; it was a decisive campaign, the celebrated campaign of the union of the Centres which was opening.

Would M. Jules Simon be the instrument of that policy? It was thought that he would draw away from the Left the hundred votes which made it possible to govern without the advanced Republican party and against it. M. Émile de Girardin warned M. Jules Simon: "For the honour of his name, it is important that M. Jules Simon should not forswear himself. He must not be other than his former self. He would be neither sincere nor clever if all his efforts did not tend not to loosen the union of the four Lefts, but, on the contrary, to make it closer. A man who has the support of such a majority, led by such a powerful speaker as M. Gambetta, and who is President of the Council, need not submit to conditions; he can dictate his own."

Such were the different thoughts which occurred at once to M. Jules Simon as he went to the Élysée on the 10th December. He had announced to his friends that he would only agree to enter the Cabinet if he were offered the Presidency of the Council.

Marshal MacMahon offered him the Ministry of the Interior, immediately adding that the Minister of Justice would be chosen from the Left group. M. Jules Simon asked for a few hours' consideration. Some conversations took place in the interval. M. Jules Simon came to an understanding with General Berthaut on the question of funeral honours: it was agreed that they would only be rendered at the house of mourning. The disagreement which existed between M. Léon Say and the Duc Decazes was smoothed over. The President had made it a condition that the Minister for War and the Foreign Minister, "who is consulted by the whole of Europe," said the good Marshal, should be maintained. M. Jules Simon made no objection, but he continued to demand the Presidency of the Council. The crisis continued, the Chamber and the public became impatient. The Marshal was in a very bad humour. M. Jules Simon was the last resource, the last card. M. Jules Simon might be M. Thiers, but he surely was not M. Gambetta. Besides, he belonged to no party and seemed one of those who could be influenced. Where was the risk? Time might be gained, a Republican might be compromised, the majority might be divided, and thus the goal might be reached. M. Dufaure had finally resigned, that issue was now closed. . . . It would have to be M. Jules Simon!

Another Council took place on the evening of the 10th. The Ministers insisted that the Marshal should give the Presidency of the Council to M. Jules Simon. The Marshal ended by surrendering. The next day, M. Jules Simon was called to the Élysée. The President announced his intention and left him the choice of a Keeper of the Seals. M. Jules Simon pronounced the names of MM. Martel and Le Royer. "The Marshal immediately chose M. Martel." "Thus," said M. Jules

Simon, "I entered into a Cabinet which I had not formed but of which I had taken the Presidency." Was an understanding arrived at on all delicate points? We know by the Marshal's speech what were the conditions of the latter: "I accept M. Jules Simon at the hands of M. Dufaure . . . on certain conditions . . . ."[1]

Were these conditions examined, debated, accepted? There are some things which situations enforce and upon which wisdom is silent. Events would call for decisions.

The Jules Simon Cabinet.

On Wednesday, the 13th, the *Journal Officiel* published three decrees, according to which the Cabinet was now composed thus:

Minister of the Interior and President of the Council.	M. JULES SIMON.
Minister of Justice and Public Worship.	M. MARTEL.
,, ,, *Foreign Affairs*	DUC DECAZES.
,, ,, *Finance*	M. LÉON SAY.
,, ,, *Public Works*	M. CHRISTOPHLE.
,, ,, *Agriculture and Commerce*	M. TEISSERENC DE BORT.
,, ,, *Education*	M. WADDINGTON.
,, ,, *Marine*	ADMIRAL FOURICHON.
,, ,, *War*	GENERAL BERTHAUT.

M. Méline, a Deputy, was appointed Under-Secretary of State for Justice. M. Faye, Under-Secretary of State for the Interior, retired and was not replaced.

M. Jules Simon stated his programme in the Chamber of Deputies on the 14th December, 1876.

Ministerial Declaration.

In his insinuating, caressing voice, in an even and familiar tone, he spoke of the circumstances which had brought him into power . . . his was a contrast to M. Dufaure's rough and unpleasant voice. The

[1] See p. 553.

strong manner was succeeded by the gentle manner. The new President glided into power rather than took possession of it. The audience, nervous and divided at first, allowed itself to be soothed.

First a few compliments to the retiring Ministers, M. Dufaure and M. de Marcère. Then the subject was opened: "I do not bring you a programme, it is not required, either for me, who have been so long in political life, nor for my friend, M. Martel, nor for the remaining Ministers."

Here the speaker raised his voice, and turned towards the Left. "I am, as you know, deeply Republican. . . ." (Applause on the Left and in the Centre.) "I say that I am deeply Republican" (the speaker turns towards the Right), "and deeply Conservative. . . ." (renewed and lively approbation); "devoted by all the convictions, all the studies of my life, to the principle of liberty of conscience" (great applause on many benches), "and with a sincere respect for religion." (Renewed applause.) The pendulum continued to swing. "The Cabinet which you have before you is, and desires to remain, a Parliamentary Cabinet" (applause); "we cannot, Gentlemen, do better than to follow the example which is given us by the Head of the Republic, who on every occasion makes a point of following, in the most accurate manner, the principles of a Constitutional Government." (Loud applause.)

Rarely was a declaration better received, everybody was pleased. . . . It was necessary, however, to steer to the Left in order to secure the support of the majority. "We agree amongst ourselves and with the majority of the Parliament, we desire, like that majority, the maintenance, the final establishment of the Republican Constitution which France has adopted. . . . It is not enough that functionaries in every degree of hierarchy, should punctually execute the orders which they receive

and apply the laws, all the laws, with vigilance and firmness, they must also by their acts, by their conduct, by their language, give an example of respect for the Government of which they are the organs." (Repeated and prolonged applause from the Centre and from the Left.) "Our resolve to see to it, Gentlemen, is unshakeable"—"unshakeable" brought down the House, and made a fine conclusion to the declaration.

The President of the Council, highly pleased, then went to the Senate, which was waiting for him to open the sitting. He read the speech which he had just made from the text taken down by the stenographers of the Chamber. Emotion had cooled down, the welcome was not so warm; "M. Jules Simon received the congratulations of a few Senators."

After mental balance had been recovered, the situation was considered; the constitution of the Jules Simon Cabinet was a success for the Moderate Lefts. The policy of M. Jules Grévy, M. Jules Ferry, and, perhaps, of M. Thiers, behind the scenes, was justified. France was saved from the Radical party. Between the Dufaure Cabinet and the Left Cabinets a medium was reached. On the other hand, the advanced Left felt, and showed, disappointment and ill-humour.

M. Jules Simon had foreseen this state of mind. On the very day when he constituted the Cabinet, he had called together the *bureaux* of the Lefts and said to them: "I am with you, body and soul. Of course I do not promise you miracles; but I am willing, consistent and hard working. I do not flatter myself that I am the absolute master of the Government, but I am of the Cabinet; the rest is a question of time and patience, and especially of agreement between the Chamber and myself." [1]

[1] Jules Ferry, vol. ii., p. 311.

That agreement was not so easy to realise.

Jules Simon and Gambetta.

Between M. Jules Simon and M. Gambetta an old quarrel existed: the rivalry of influence which went back to the Empire had grown with the ineffaceable memory of the day in Bordeaux, when M. Jules Simon had wrenched the power from M. Gambetta. From that time, they had acted together on parallel lines, so to speak, but without knowing each other. The growing star of the young tribune darkened the twilight of the old athlete. M. Jules Simon had taken refuge in the friendship of M. Thiers. Suddenly, fortune placed him on a pedestal. How would this somewhat unexpected ascent be received?

The sudden turn of the Marshal towards M. Jules Simon seemed suspicious. The Moderate character of the new Cabinet was more marked than that of the Dufaure Cabinet. As the words and intentions of the President of the Council could not very well be attacked, hostility was shown towards the most modest of his collaborators. M. Méline had been made Under-Secretary of State for Justice: in the Chamber, M. Georges Périn, and, in the Press, the *République Française*, attacked M. Méline and accused him of having taken part in the Commune. A singular reproach coming from the Extreme Left!

Those polemics lasted for several days. M. Tirard explained the rôle of M. Méline, who, elected a Municipal Councillor, had, in fact, been present at no sitting of the Commune, and had resigned by letter on the 29th March. . . . M. Méline was a Moderate, a friend of M. Jules Ferry.

He gave a proof of his firmness by dismissing M. Bailleul, *avocat général* at the Besançon Court; he had recognised the legality of the mixed Committees instituted at the time of the *Coup d'État* of December 1851. This

decision struck at the judicial *personnel* of the Empire which still occupied the Tribunals. Thus the Cabinet drew upon itself, from the first, the violent hatred of the Bonapartists. In spite of this proof of Republican conviction, some awkwardness lingered in the relations between M. Jules Simon and the Left. M. Jules Ferry put the question: "Now that M. Gambetta has wrecked the Dufaure Cabinet, will he become an opponent instead of a protector?"

The last days of the year had come, the Budget was not voted. The Christmas holidays were drawing near, a few days' respite for the Cabinet. However, the finance law furnished the occasion of the first bout.

The Financial Rights of the Senate.

On Tuesday, 17th December, the Senate began the examination of the Budget of expenses. Immediately, M. Pouyer-Quertier raised a difficulty, previous to all discussion, and prejudicial to the working of the Constitution. What were the rights of the Senate in financial matters? Had it the faculty of re-establishing credits demanded by the Government and refused by the Chamber? The text of the Constitutional Law was lacking in precision.

According to the interpretation given to that clause, the axis of power should incline towards one or the other of the two Chambers. The Finance Committee of the Senate unanimously declared that the right of the Senate to re-establish credits was incontestable. In fact, several credits were re-established on Mgr. Dupanloup's intervention: those which related to military chaplains and the salary of curates. The most authoritative members of the Senate, on the other hand, declared that no conflict was sought. The Budget was voted on the 27th December and referred to the Chamber. On Thursday, 28th December, the General

Reporter, M. Cochery, maintained the suppressions decided by the Chamber. The question of principle was put by M. Gambetta, President of the Budget Committee, who denied the right of the Senate to re-establish a credit refused by the Chamber. He advised the Chamber to judge of the question on its merits and not to discuss the clauses of the Budget which had been amended by the Senate.

M. Jules Simon spoke and defended the rights of the Senate against Gambetta. He demanded that each of the amended clauses should be discussed; his very pressing arguments appealed especially to considerations of opportunism. "A conflict," said he, "can have no issue but Dissolution. What will be the result? What will be the judgment of France? The Constitution will be strengthened or broken. It is very imprudent to give up the country to such disputes, to such a grave crisis, when we know with what joy it renounced provisional arrangements. . . . It will compromise internal peace and at what a moment, my God! . . ." This produced much emotion, the cause was won.

A ballot was taken; by 358 votes against 136, the Chamber declared that the clause should be discussed. Two hundred Republican deputies voted with the Government, whilst Gambetta and the Extreme Left voted against.

Was this the beginning of a schism, a first indication of a coalition of the Centres and of the formation of a new majority? In any case, Mr. Jules Simon had taken a step towards the Right. His first movement had been to seek the support of the Senate.

The Chamber adopted some of the amendments voted by the Senate: the latter accepted some of the reductions maintained by the Chamber, and a conflict was avoided.

The Budget for 1877.

The Budget was returned from the Chamber and voted by the Senate on the 29th December, and published in the *Journal Officiel* on Saturday the 30th. The receipts amounted to 2,737,003,812 francs, the expenses to 2,736,247,962 francs, that is, an excess of receipts of 755,850 francs. It was settled later, as 2,796,041,450 francs' receipts and 2,732,173,000 francs' expenses. It was the first Budget of the Republic.

On Saturday, 30th December, the Chambers held a short sitting in order to hear the closing decree of the extraordinary session. Thus ended, in reassuring calm, the cycle of that Parliamentary year, which had seen the trial of the new Constitution.

II

During the January holidays, the new Cabinet sought for its proper ground. It was a very narrow one. The diverging tendencies are described by two very significant testimonies. The *Défense Sociale et Religieuse*, Mgr. Dupanloup's organ, which assumed so much importance that it seemed as if it spoke for the Élysée, wrote on the 28th December, on the day when M. Jules Simon caused a first split in the Republican majority regarding the financial authority of the Senate: "M. Jules Simon will oppose the Budget Committee, he will openly oppose M. Gambetta. We believe that he will be victorious. He will disorganise the Left of the Chamber as he has disorganised that of the Senate. We know that the Republican Left is deeply divided. This young, inexperienced Chamber will give way to the gentle tones of a voice which it does not yet know. . . ."

The *République Française* did not require this warning to admonish the President of the Council from a different point of view. "If the Head of the Cabinet hesitates, if his acts do not correspond with his reputation or with his language, if he makes promises and does not keep them, if he makes use of his abilities merely to elude difficulties and to do nothing of what is expected from him, if he allows himself to be suspected of having two kinds of friends, avowed friends for whom nothing is done, and concealed ones for whom everything is done . . . it is to be feared that he will soon see his authority decrease. Such methods cannot be practised long."

Embarrassment of M. Jules Simon.

No intimation came from the Élysée: the silence of the Marshal was noticed at the official receptions of the 1st of January. M. Jules Simon, on the contrary, worked very hard, assuring the military chiefs of his devotion, for his adversaries were beginning to embarrass him with his own former declarations: under the Empire, he had asked for the abolition of permanent armies, and he was accused of being an adversary of the Army. Leaders of public opinion ought never to forget that they share with the leaders of the Government many final responsibilities.

M. Jules Simon visited the Duc d'Aumale, his colleague at the Académie Française. In spite of their intellectual comradeship, the moment seemed inopportune.

The question of the *personnel* was still on the *tapis*. The *République Française* of the 7th January wrote: "This question of the officials will be the great question for the Cabinet of the 13th December and its eminent Head." There always is a great deal to say about complex measures of this kind, which generally cause more discontent than satisfaction. The importance of the coming

changes was increased by the knowledge that the year which was beginning would be a year of elections—municipal elections, departmental elections, and, consequently, future Senatorial elections; the very future of the institutions was involved.

The list, after long discussions, appeared at the *Officiel* on the 6th January and the 22nd February. On the 6th January, eight *préfets* were dismissed, all of whom were of a Bonapartist origin, or devoted to the policy of M. Buffet. On the 22nd February came the turn of the General Secretaries, *sous-préfets*, and Préfecture Councillors. In all, 153 officials were involved, and 75 Departments. The number of dismissals rose to 39, whilst eight officials were placed on half-pay. Amongst the officials temporarily deprived of their posts, was a relation of the Marshal. . . . But this was not enough! The *Rappel* demanded 50 dismissals!—the *République Française* sulked: it urged the President of the Council to beware of those who wished him to be "too Conservative."

The measure taken by M. Jules Simon, with its marked anti-Bonapartist character, broke up the administrative framework which had endured until then. It completed the Constitutional reform by the reform of the *personnel*, and prepared new organs for a future policy. M. Jules Simon, after M. Dufaure, was engaged in an ungrateful task.

He was not trusted.

An advanced Republican, M. Ch. Floquet, stated the sentiments of his party in a speech which he delivered on the 7th January. "Our party," said he, "has not obtained the victories which might have been hoped from the great impulse of 1876. By rejecting general meetings, we have allowed personal power to take precedence over national representation. Result: a

Cabinet born of the will of the Executive and itself declaring that it is not free. Another blunder: the Chamber has not taken precautions against Dissolution and against the fighting Cabinet with which it is threatened by hastening to take measures, such as the appointment of mayors, freedom for the Press, right of meeting, etc., which might have prevented such a policy. If the Cabinet wishes to do what is expected of it, let it apply the well-known programme of the head of the Government. . . . Do not let us listen to the 'Parliamentary Doctors' who tell us that we must ask the Cabinet for reforms, but who own, in their private conversations, that, if those reforms are refused, we must nevertheless support the Cabinet. Such tactics of humility are not for us. . . . The President of the Council, in 1870, when in his full maturity, claimed for us every liberty. Did we not see him lead the Associations' campaign? Have we not heard him invoke Socialism and inquire, with a noble ardour, into the fate of working men and women? That is the programme we want; a Republican, Progressist, Radical programme—in one word, the whole programme of M. Jules Simon. . . . As to the execution of it, we are ready to grant him time, but let him at least begin!"

M. Jules Simon was caught in the ambiguities of the situation, pressed between the past and the present. The Press-man had become a Minister, the leader of the opposition had become the head of the Government, and the Moderate man was crushed by the distrust of the two opposing advanced parties.

Parliament reopens.

Parliament reopened on the 9th January. M. Jules Grévy was elected President of the Chamber by 326 votes out of 340. MM. Lepère, Rameau, Bethmont, and the Comte de Durfort de Civrac, were Vice-Presidents.

The Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier was elected President of the Senate by 195 out of 239 votes. There were 42 blank bulletins. MM. de Ladmirault, Audren de Kerdrel, Duclerc, and Comte Rampon were elected Vice-Presidents.

On Friday, the 12th January, after the Chamber had passed the first reading of the Bill on the organisation of ambulance services in the Army in military and civil hospitals, M. du Bodan asked a question of M. Martel, Keeper of the Seals, about the dismissal of M. Bailleul, *avocat-général* at the Besançon Court. M. Martel was ill, the Seals had been taken to his bedside. Nevertheless he ascended the tribune and said what he thought of mixed Committees: "justly condemned by public conscience." The Bonapartist Right constantly interrupted his speech, uttered in a weak voice. The stentorian voice of M. Paul de Cassagnac filled the hall. The fainting Minister was not overwhelmed by this tumult, but faced it bravely: "Justice by Committee is the most odious form of justice." The Left supported and applauded him.

The question was transformed into an interpellation. M. Martel, exhausted, left the hall. M. Jules Simon held firm. M. Grévy intervened. By 367 votes against 2, the Chamber adopted the following wording, moved by the Presidents of the three Left groups, MM. Charles Lepère, Albert Grévy and Henri Germain: "The Chamber associates itself with the judgment passed on mixed Committees by the organs of the Government, approves the conduct of the Keeper of the Seals and trusts in his firmness. . . ."

This was a success for the Government. The Left majority was frankly backing it. The criminal Chamber of the *Cour de Cassation*, by a decree rendered under the Presidency of M. Devienne on the 3rd February,

consecrated the legality of the work of the mixed Committees against the conclusions of M. Renouard, *procureur-général*. M. Devienne was soon induced to ask for his pension, not at his own wish, and without being appointed, as is usual, an Honorary President. He was replaced by M. Mercier. The Imperial magistrature was now on its trial at the bar of public opinion.

The Government had now drawn nearer to the Left. More pardons for the convicts of the Commune were published on the 19th December, 1876, and the 6th January, 1877. On the 13th January, a note in the *Journal Officiel* announced that the Government would consent to extend to the insurgents of 1871, convicted by default, the benefit of those pardons, on the condition that they should present themselves before Courts-martial; the leaders of the Commune were excepted.

Public prayers took place on the 14th January in the whole of France, according to the Constitution, on the occasion of the opening of the Parliamentary session. At Versailles, Marshal MacMahon, the Ministers, the *bureaux* of both Chambers, some Senators and some Deputies were present at the services in the Palace.

M. de Marcère President of the Left Centre.

M. de Marcère was elected President of the Left Centre in place of M. H. Germain. The Left Centre was very prudent, knowing how delicate was the situation. The nomination of M. de Marcère was an advance made to the Left. "We offer our faithful assistance to our friends of the Lefts who, in the same spirit of unity which animates us, will not ask us for impossible sacrifices. . . ." Where was now the union of the Centres?

M. Laussedat, the elected President of the *Union Républicaine* in the place of M. Lepère, answered: "The Union will not fail. . . . However, the country awaits the serious reforms which the Republic had promised;

it is in the very essence of this form of Government to fulfil those promises; amongst those reforms, several are of an urgent character; our duty is to demand them, to pursue them calmly and persistently."

On the whole, there was a temporary lull, the tone of the Left Press was less hostile, less suspicious. M. Jules Ferry notes this with pleasure and some illusions: "The characteristic phenomenon of the new session is a feeling of pacification (17th January); not only is the surface calm, there is also less agitation in deeper waters . . . what could be wiser than to negotiate with the majority of the Deputies? Such a perpetual compromise will form the programme of all Republican Governments until 1880. . . . M. Jules Simon, who is endowed with great foresight, understood this from the first moment . . . the war of epigrams, insinuations and sarcasms has ended as if by magic." *À propos* of a question by M. Robert Mitchell, in which M. Barême, afterwards *Préfet* of the Eure, was attacked, M. Jules Simon made very firm declarations on the subject of the attitude of the officials: "I will part from those who cannot, with me, serve the country and the Republic; I will energetically defend the others."

M. Léon Say had introduced on the 11th January the plan of the Budget of 1878. The Chamber met on the 25th January in order to elect the Budget Committee . . . and again, suddenly, divisions broke out.

The Budget Committee.

A veiled attempt had been made to take the Chairmanship of the Committee from M. Gambetta. The Moderate Lefts had claimed that each group should be represented proportionately within the Committee, which would have secured for them the election of the Chairman. The *Union Républicaine* refused. A vote was taken. To the surprise of everybody, the Extreme Left obtained the advantage. It

was said that, in consequence of some obscure confabulations, the Rights had voted for the most advanced members of the Left. The Committee included sixteen members of the Extreme Left, ten of the Left, six of the Left Centre and one of the Constitutionalist group. Gambetta was elected Chairman on the 27th, by 29 votes out of 32.

Gambetta took malicious pleasure, when taking possession of the chair, in pronouncing a most moderate speech, most amiable towards the Ministry: "Let us set to work with the sentiments of concord and union which should move the representatives of a wise and progressive Republic. Let us prove to the power, of which we are faithful supporters, that we can combine firmness with sympathy and confidence. We are not men of conflict; we claim our rights, but no more."

The Moderate Lefts were beaten; they insisted no further. M. Leblond, elected on the 21st January President of the Republican Left, spoke in the name of the group and emphasised the movement leftwards: "A certain agitation had taken place within our ranks, it seemed as if the union of the Lefts were seriously compromised. . . . Those apprehensions have not been realised." The union of the Centres was dead, the Cabinet was very low.

The game of battledore and shuttlecock which threw M. Jules Simon from one side to the other of the political arena was soon resumed. M. Tardieu questioned him, on the 1st February, concerning the application to Catholic clubs of the Law of Societies. M. Jules Simon was accused of weakness towards ultramontane undertakings. He became nervous: "No, no, I will not allow any violation of the Law . . . and if you think that I speak somewhat violently, it is because the sentiments which are attributed to me are so far from my

intentions that I cannot help protesting with the utmost energy; it is because my conscience is in revolt. . . . No, no, either I shall have complete power, or I shall not have a particle of power. . . ." The incident was closed.

The month of February passed in comparative calm. The Cabinet became accustomed to govern with the Chambers rather than with the majority. That is to say, in many circumstances, the votes of the Right came to its assistance in order to defeat or to adjourn the offensive tactics of the Extreme Left. The latter continued regularly to introduce propositions of which the Right continued to denounce the danger. M. Cantagrel demanded, on the 16th January, guarantees for the exercise of the right of association; M. Ratier (22nd January) wished to impose upon students in seminaries, in order to be exempt from military service, an engagement to practise their ministry in France for five years; M. Marcou introduced, on the 6th of February, a Bill intended to withdraw from the jurisdiction of the Courts-martial cases still left before them relating to facts connected with the Commune; on the same day, M. Benjamin Raspail introduced a proposition respecting the celebration of the marriage of members of religious orders or of the priesthood.

The *Crédit Foncier.*

The Government initiated more immediately efficacious reforms. By a decree of the 24th January, M. Jules Renouard was appointed Director of the *Crédit Foncier* in the place of M. Frémy, whose resignation was accepted. That decree was preceded by a Report announcing that the appointment was provisional and intended to regulate the situation of the *Crédit Foncier* engaged to the amount of 170 millions in the operations of the *Crédit Agricole*, founded in 1860 under its auspices. On the advice of the Government, the *Crédit Foncier* absorbed the *Crédit Agricole* and was entrusted with the

liquidation of that Society. The era of financial catastrophes opened, for the third Republic, by a liquidation of which the origin went back to the second Empire. Admiral Baron Roussin was appointed Under-Secretary of State for the Navy, and M. Michaux, Director of the Colonies in the place of M. Benoist d'Azy. This was the solution of the unhappy affair of the Comores.

Elementary Education.

M. Waddington, Minister of Public Education, introduced, on Monday, the 29th January, a Bill intended to facilitate and to extend the possibilities of Primary Education. Already in 1877, 3,545 schools were freely opened to children between six and thirteen.

On the 9th February, M. Teisserenc de Bort, Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, moved a Bill relating to the establishment of the new general tariff of the Douanes.

The groups of the Right and the groups of the Left let no opportunity go by of alternately dragging the President of the Council towards the one or the other party, to embarrass him or to make him contradict himself.

The Liberty of the Press.

The Government had decided, on the 1st February, to prosecute for insults to the President of the Republic and for condoning criminal offences (the Commune), the manager of the *Journal des Droits de l'Homme*. The incriminating articles, signed "X—Y—," were by M. Henri Rochefort. In accordance with the law of the 11th May, 1868, the Manager of the *Droits de l'Homme* was sentenced to three months' imprisonment and 3,000 francs' fine, and the judgment was confirmed by the Court of Appeal. M. Henri Rochefort immediately founded the *Lanterne* with MM. Henry Maret, Adrien Duvand, Monprofit, and G. Puissant; the first number appeared on the 22nd April, 1877.

This was a new opportunity of placing M. Jules Simon, President of the Council, in opposition with M. Jules Simon, Deputy under the Empire. This question of the liberty of the Press was the gridiron on which he was to be roasted.

On the 5th February, M. Madier de Montjau desired to question the Cabinet on its general policy. The incident had no sequel; but, on the same day, a motion by the same M. Madier de Montjau was discussed, rescinding the decree on the Press of the 17th February, 1852. Urgency was declared. Clause I. was adopted without a debate; in agreement with the Government, the Committee was to present a Clause II., re-establishing the Press Laws anterior to 1852. The Chairman said that such a clause was superfluous since the matter was obvious. M. Jules Simon insisted: "The clause is necessary, some doubts might arise. The Government cannot remain disarmed." He was obviously prompted.

M. Raoul Duval, in his softest voice, recalled the celebrated campaign of M. Jules Simon in favour of the liberty of the Press: "The Ministers of the Republic must not follow the principles of the Monarchies; if they did, the Republic would be a mere formula." M. Raoul Duval hoped that M. Jules Simon, now that he was in power, would favour the liberty of the Press of which he had been the apostle. Must he give up that illusion? He compared M. Jules Simon to the Duc de Broglie and to those men of the Liberal Opposition of 1869: "for whom authority had been but the road to Damascus which led to unlimited and absolute power." M. Jules Simon, who was by no means invulnerable, answered very sharply, but M. Raoul Duval said, phlegmatically: "Be assured that nothing would be more agreeable to those whom you call a militant faction than that you

should disown yourselves, as the Cabinet so frequently disowns its former opinions."

Clause II. and the Bill as a whole were carried by a show of hands.

Ministerial Difficulties.

The relations of M. Jules Simon with the politicians who surrounded and watched over him were influenced by the difficulties with which he was met in the Chamber. Unity in the Cabinet was but apparent. The former Ministers—the Ministers of the Élysée—stood somewhat aloof. The Duc Decazes entered the Council, spoke a few words, and departed, carrying his portfolio full of diplomatic secrets. A survivor of a past age, he was not more congenial to the majority in the Chamber than to the majority in the Council. M. Thiers and M. Gambetta continued against him the campaign begun regarding the Suez Canal affair. Financial and international questions lay below the surface in that campaign.

The Duc Decazes.

The Duc Decazes, somewhat overrating the confidence of the Marshal and his own services, was not so careful as he had been; he shut himself up in the Quai d'Orsay and took no trouble to ingratiate himself. M. Jules Ferry wrote: "The public is visibly prejudiced against the Duc Decazes, not the European public, but a certain portion of the Parisian public, very active, very suspicious, very hard on men in authority. . . . M. le Duc Decazes is not a good Minister for external relations because he is essentially, fundamentally, incorrigibly frivolous. . . . From the way he manages little things, I judge of his way of managing great things."

The portrait was not a flattering one; but it explains the new tendency of public opinion, so long favourable to the Duc Decazes. His first blunder was eagerly awaited; a slight incident, a delay in the communication

of a dispatch announcing the resignation of Midhat Pacha, almost set fire to the mine. It was said, and printed, that the delay was intended, and that the whole thing was a Stock Exchange plot. M. Jules Simon spoke very sharply to the Foreign Minister. He did not find in him enough deference, and gave him to understand that it was so. A quarrel and some explanations took place. It was said that the delay in the dispatch was due to the *Chargé d'Affaires* in Constantinople. In the Chamber, M. Antonin Proust demanded explanations, and alluded to the disagreement between the Ministers. The Duc Decazes explained himself rather confusedly. In fact, the dispatch had been forgotten for a whole night at the Quai d'Orsay. M. Jules Simon asserted that concord prevailed between the Ministers in such a tone that it was well understood that that accord did not exist. The Duc Decazes tendered his resignation. He thought that the President of the Council had entered into a conspiracy to make him give up his portfolio. There were reciprocal reproaches and recriminations. Finally, on the interference of Marshal MacMahon, the two Ministers met at the house of the Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier, "who reconciled the two adversaries without much difficulty." The Left thought that M. Jules Simon had once again given way to the *camarilla*, and the Right judged that M. Jules Simon had been too presumptuous when he assumed power, since he lacked the necessary authority to defend a Minister like the Duc Decazes.

Committees in the Palais-Bourbon.

Ordinary Parliamentary work continued, but it was retarded by the daily coming and going of the political *personnel* between the two capitals, Versailles and Paris. A return to Paris began to be thought of. MM. Beaussire and de Marcère asked that Committees might be allowed, if necessary, to meet in the Palais-Bourbon. The propo-

sition was carried. The Chambers in Paris! One more piece of the National Assembly's work was being wrecked. This was felt to be so at the Élysée.

Death of General Changarnier.

General Changarnier died: the President of the Committee of Nine, the hero of the siege of Constantine was also one of the champions of "moral order." M. de Cissey proposed in the Senate, on the 15th February, that the obsequies of the General should take place at the Invalides, at the expense of the State. But the proposition was withdrawn on the assurance of the Government that the funeral would have a character of suitable solemnity. On Saturday, the 17th, the ceremony took place in the presence of the President of the Republic, the Duc d'Aumale, the Prince de Joinville, etc. The service was read by the Cardinal-Archbishop of Paris. Quite another world!

The Fiscal *Régime.*

Reforms continued; on Friday, the 16th February, M. Menier proposed that the Chamber should proceed to an inquiry into the whole of the fiscal system and reforms which might improve it. Logically speaking, a new *régime* should place fiscal reform in the first rank of its cares. The fiscal system sanctions the necessary relations between Society and the Government. Taxes on property, on inheritance, on articles of consumption and on commercial transactions may, by a slow and accumulating action, transform property, reduce inheritance, develop or trammel commerce, secure or annihilate public prosperity. There is some Socialism in every fiscal policy.

A considerable number of varying propositions had been brought forward since the inauguration of Republican institutions, including the following:—

Fiscal Motions.

1. The motion of M. Thourel, suppressing personal taxes.

2. The motion of M. Menier, replacing certain duties by a single tax of 1% on capital.
3. The Gasté motion, granting supplementary allowances to retired soldiers, sailors and labourers.
4. The Mention motion, establishing a tax on pianos, organs, harmoniums, etc., etc.

Why did not Gambetta's Bill on income-tax figure on this list? M. Cazeaux, a Bonapartist, insisted: "I hope that the honourable M. Gambetta will ask that his question be joined to all the others, for thus we shall be convinced that he did not ascend the tribune merely to cover his retreat." (Shouts from the benches: "It was an electioneering cry.") Gambetta said that the proposition which had been examined by the preceding Budget Committee had never been brought to the Chamber, which explained why it had not figured on the list. The proposition would be introduced, if expedient, after the constitution of the special Committee. He was beating a retreat. The income-tax is not one of those reforms which can be improvised and decided hurriedly.

The Right asked that the various motions should be referred to the Budget Committee: "You want to leave to others," said M. de La Rochette, "the responsibility of the reforms which you have proposed." Finally, it was decided that two distinct Committees, the Budget Committee and the Reforms Committee, should be simultaneously constituted; here again was an important point of Parliamentary procedure which was settled by Gambetta's authority: "The Budget Committee was to confine itself exclusively to the study of the yearly Finance Bill. Reforms were to be constituted by special Committees and applied by special Bills, but not incorporated with the Finance Bill."

Army Reform.

After fiscal reform, military reform. M. Laisant and his friends repeatedly proposed that the five years' service should be replaced by a three years' service and that Volunteering should be abolished. On Friday, the 23rd February, the Chamber took that proposition, signed by more than 200 Deputies, into consideration. The Committee elected by the *bureaux* comprised seven members contrary to the proposal and four who were favourable. M. Thiers was a member of it. It met at his house on the 2nd of March. The former President of the Republic wished to give his opinion; he stated it with some warmth: "Since I have left power, I have abstained from taking part in any public discussions; for I will, in no degree, be a party to anything which might be an attack on the present Government. To-day, the interest of the country is at stake; I speak before the Committee; I will speak before the tribune. On the day when the Laisant motion is voted, there will be illuminations in Berlin." M. Thiers recognised that the five years' Law had failed. "We have now no non-commissioned officers." Therefore he goes frankly back to the Law of 1832. "The Army has a rival, Industry. Let us make of the Army a career if we wish to have soldiers." Such were the supreme counsels of M. Thiers.

On the 5th March, M. Pascal Duprat pronounced against M. Thiers for an Army of numbers, a democratic Army, a "defensive Army." The Minister, on the 14th March, opposed the Laisant proposition, which was rejected, whilst the Bill of 1873 was maintained by the Committee, at its sitting of the 17th March, by a large majority.

The Senate read for the second time, on the 24th February, a Bill inaugurating a whole system of

assistance in favour of vine-owners whose vineyards had been attacked by phylloxera.

On the 26th February, on a motion of M. Jules Ferry, who had made himself a specialist in Colonial questions, the Chamber granted to French Guiana and to Senegal, already represented in the Senate, the right of representation in the Chamber of Deputies.

On Thursday, the 1st March, the Chamber voted a resolution emanating from M. Cochery, of which the object was the appointment of a Committee of Inquiry into the general system of railways and other means of communication in France. This was the starting-point of the studies which ended in the "Freycinet plan."

The Schools Fund.

The campaign in favour of free elementary Education was also continued. M. Waddington introduced into the Chamber (1st March) a Bill for the constitution of a fund for the building of school-houses. This was the famous "Schools fund" which has since been turned into a reproach to the Republican party. "It is," said the Minister, "a question of 120 millions." (Applause on many benches.) As if to manifest the bearing and inward meaning of this proposition, M. Talandier submitted to the Chamber, on the same day, a Bill of which the object was "to secure liberty of conscience in schools and in examinations." Was this not the birth of a new order, the dawn of a new world?

Opposition from the Senate.

In the eyes of many, there lay the danger. Threatened convictions, beliefs, and interests were seeking for assistance and support. Would they find it in the institutions themselves? The Senate attempted to resist, but very feebly, with small and precarious majorities. M. Jérôme David, in order to put an obstacle in the way of the redoubtable omnipotence of

majorities, had proposed to add to the reforms and regulations of the Chamber a bye-law entrusting the *bureau* with the supervision of the work of Committees and protecting minorities against arbitrary majorities. After a debate, in which there were many ebullitions of wrath, the proposition was not taken into consideration. The emotion which began to spread throughout the Right was increased by the election which took place at Avignon on the 25th February and which was considered as symbolical. M. du Demaine's election had been invalidated. He was standing again with no other competitor than M. Eugène Raspail, a moderate Republican. Feeling himself beaten, M. du Demaine retired. Then a Radical, M. Saint-Martin, presented himself. M. du Demaine resumed his candidature. He obtained on the 11th February, 8,382 votes, M. Saint-Martin 4,798, and M. Eugène Raspail 4,670. M. Eugène Raspail withdrew in favour of M. Saint-Martin, and, finally, on the 25th February, M. Saint-Martin was elected by 9,704 against 9,099 to M. du Demaine.

The Right Press denounced the inevitable abdication of the Conservative Republic into the hands of the Radical Republic.

The *Français* revealed a more subtle opinion: "The walls of our third Republic would not bear with impunity a repetition of such shocks. If we do not succeed in constituting within Parliament, or outside Parliament, a governing Republican party, resolutely hostile to the Radicals, and if, on the other hand, failing this party, of which the formation seems doubtful to many, honest men of all parties do not unite, it may be predicted that the third Republic, following the example of its elders, will sooner or later make place for a terrible reaction." M. Jules Simon was warned.

Speech of the Comte de Chambord.

The hopes to which the Cabinet had, for a moment, given rise were vanishing. It was best, after all, to do one's own business. The Comte de Chambord thought that the hour had come to remind public opinion of his existence. Having to receive at Goritz, on the 1st March, a deputation of Legitimists from Marseilles, he addressed to those visitors a speech of which an account was sent to the papers: "Yes, I know people have dared to say that, in order to remain in comfortable idleness, I was leaving France in peril and giving up all hopes of saving her. This is an odious lie. . . . Discouragement is the great danger which I denounce and which must be fought against. . . ." It seemed as if a "Monarchical awakening" was at hand. Time was pressing; a period of the deepest importance from an electoral point of view was drawing near; would the Jules Simon Cabinet be allowed to remain in power and to preside over this vast consultation of the country?

Coming Elections.

Five successive tests were to consolidate or weaken the new institutions:—

The re-election of half the General Councils and the *Arrondissement* Councils, in November 1877.

The wholesale re-election of the Municipal Councils, in December 1877.

The Senatorial elections, in January 1879.

The elections of Deputies, in February 1880.

The election of the President of the Republic, in November 1880.

Those acts were narrowly bound one to another. If any action was to be taken when the time came, preparations should be begun at once.

The Legitimist party in the Chamber met and took

note of the Goritz speech. "On the occasion of the words recently uttered by M. le Comte de Chambord, the Right of the Chamber of Deputies asserts its intention to bring even greater energy into the defence of religious and political principles on the ground of Social order."

And, what was yet more precise, the *Défense*, Mgr. Dupanloup's journal, attacked M. Jules Simon: "The Élysée has never taken the 1875 Constitution seriously. It has done what it could to live with the majority of the Chamber through the intermediary of M. Dufaure. At the fall of the latter, the Élysée would willingly have entered into open strife with the majority. The 'faithful friends' of the Marshal, MM. de Broglie and Buffet, did not believe that the hour had come and refused 'to take the responsibility of power and of the battle. . . .' With an admirable abnegation, the Marshal suffered M. Jules Simon. But M. Jules Simon did not succeed better than M. Dufaure. He is doomed." The *Défense* "did not doubt the foresight of Marshal MacMahon;" it *knew* that he was waiting for a time to declare the *experiment at an end*. . . . He undertakes to prevent the evil which the President of the Council might still attempt through his presence and his "intrigues."

That revelation of what was going on was so very brutal that people refused to believe it well founded. The *Défense* was accused of trying to compromise the Marshal. As the latter said nothing, his silence was interpreted favourably. But, with those who were intimate with him, he no longer restrained himself. Cardinal de Bonnechose was received on the 15th March at the Elysée. He expressed to the Marshal his usual complaints of the progress of affairs. The Marshal told him without hesitation "that he had come to the end of his concessions."

The Cabinet was in the most painful situation, the Right reproached it with being the instrument of an "occult power," that of M. Gambetta; the Left saw in it but the "unconscious toy" of the Élysée. Suspected by all, it felt its powerlessness and became discouraged, whilst that very inertia gave cause to fresh recriminations. The Right and Left appealed to the much-vaunted intelligence and subtle cleverness of the President of the Council. But he dared not move: he hardly ever came to the Chamber. He was ill, and remained confined in his house at the Place Beauvau. The great orator did not even have recourse to his wonderful eloquence, the only weapon left to him.

M. Émile de Girardin writes: "M. Jules Simon, although he has only borne the burden of his Ministry for three months, has already given way under its weight." The favourite game of the moment consisted in placing the President of the Council in contradiction with his Opposition writings under the Empire. It was easy to find in the abundance of his work, a page or a line absolutely contrary to the present policy of the Premier. Marshal MacMahon watched him closely, and, twisting his moustache, coldly laughed at the embarrassment of the man who had formerly wounded him so cruelly.

The Chamber took into consideration a proposition of MM. Levavasseur, Camille Sée, Jules Ferry, etc., of which the object was the suppression of military chaplains. Now, General Berthaut, Minister for War, declared that he would oppose this Bill.

M. Hyacinthe Loyson had already asked M. de Marcère, and now asked M. Jules Simon for permission to expound his religious doctrines in a series of lectures at the Salle des Capucines. M. de Marcère had refused; M. Jules Simon refused also and invoked a decree of

1808: it was with the help of weapons forged by the First Empire that the great Liberal arrested free speech and that the philosopher repressed free thought. An old proposition of M. Bardoux, intended to grant freedom of meeting for the celebration of religious worship, was presented by M. Seignobos. Not one member of the Government was present at the debate. "And such is often the case!" said the wits of the Right. M. Raoul Duval mocked the theological alarms of M. Jules Simon and quoted the words of Mgr. Dupanloup: "He will be a Cardinal before I am."[1]

The Senate had to give a successor to General Changarnier as a Life-Senator. M. Dupuy de Lôme, a Bonapartist, was elected by 142 votes against 140 given to M. Alfred André, the Manager of the Banque de France, supported by the Rights. The Right majority did not allow itself to be shaken.

But it was always that terrible question of the liberty of the Press which pressed the iron into the soul of the President of the Council. M. de Cassagnac published articles of incredible violence. "M. du Demaine was the candidate of honest men against brigands." . . . "A final Republic is as impossible as a final fever, a final cholera, etc., etc. . . ." M. de Leffemberg, *Procureur-Général*, addressed to the Chamber a demand for permission to prosecute. The special Committee elected on the 1st March only comprised members of the Left and of the Extreme Left; it was greatly embarrassed. "To prosecute meant to abandon a great Liberal principle; not to prosecute was to leave Republican institutions defenceless and unrespected." M. Émile de Girardin instantly took up his thesis on the powerlessness of the Press. ("In Press matters, only one idea is justified:

[1] M. Jules Simon also had to provide against the difficulties which had arisen between the two sections of French Protestantism.

it is that of impunity based upon powerlessness.") He advised that the matter should be allowed to drop.

Nothing was more painful to the Left than to have to sanction in fact the application of the Law of 1875, of which it unanimously demanded the repeal. However, on the 16th March, M. Cyprien Girerd presented the report of the Committee which, by seven votes against four, had pronounced in favour of the authorisation to prosecute. The discussion took place at once. Never had M. de Cassagnac a better opportunity of attacking a Republican. His triumph was easy.

It was difficult for M. Jules Simon to answer; he did not do it very well. He declared that he had "personally" demanded a prosecution. He was not believed. . . . "The laws exist, I am obliged to apply them. . . . I am in favour of the liberty of the Press. But I am in office. Can I place my own will before the law? . . . M. de Cassagnac himself would prosecute if he were Keeper of the Seals. . . ." At last, losing patience, he spoke with some heat. "It must be well understood that, when I ask others to show some energy, I do not lack the same, and that I am ready to stand up to you here and elsewhere. . . ." "What does that mean? . . ." interrupted M. Robert Mitchell. A sudden charge against Bonapartism, so active, so militant, so dangerous through all that period, wrenched some applause from the Left. "You are a party which depends upon Fear and which intends to live, to reign, to be restored through Fear. . . . We know now that you are not inviolable; we also know that whoever attacks the Republic may be sure to meet with men who are resolved to defend it. . . ."

This time it was a man who spoke. The Left awoke. Applause burst out. In spite of protests from M. Madier de Montjau, in the name of "Sacred Principles," the

prosecution was authorised by 286 votes against 174. The number of absentees was considerable.

The motion of M. Cunéo d'Ornano to rescind Heading II. of the Law of the 29th December, 1875, on the Press, was on the agenda. M. Jules Simon was not there; M. Cazeaux, a Bonapartist, asked that one should wait for the President of the Council, "who has spoken and written so much on that question." The Left was embarrassed. M. René Brice proposed an adjournment, which was carried by 239 against 199. The Ministerial majority was falling from day to day.

And, in spite of all, the Cabinet still treated it with too much consideration in the eyes of the Élysée.

The Municipal Organisation Bill.

Yet those questions of internal organisation necessary to complete and to consolidate the new institutions, had to be considered. The Municipal Bill had remained in suspense since the time of the National Assembly. The communes were waiting for their final regulations. Everybody knew and felt that this must be done. Local life, and, through the Senatorial Elections, national life were equally concerned in the matter.

M. Jules Simon presented to the Chamber, on the 15th March, a Bill on the powers of Municipal authorities. On the same day, M. Jules Ferry read the Report on the first part of the Municipal Organisation Bill. Amongst the new facilities and liberties granted to Municipal Councils, the report demanded that *sittings should be public.* This apparently unimportant suggestion should not be lost sight of.

Railways.

The second fortnight in March was almost entirely taken up in the Chamber by the discussion on railway systems. The monopoly of the great companies was, on the whole, a survival of the time when the great *bourgeoisie* of Louis-Philippe could

dispose of this prodigious increase in national wealth and industry. Did the advantages offered by the companies compensate for the burdens, trammels and responsibilities imposed upon the Republic and upon the taxpayers? The question was raised as soon as the principle of government was modified. Democracy fears privileges whatever they may be. Private interests spurred the ardour of the men who led this campaign; small companies were being founded in answer to local needs. The debate opened on the 12th March; several new lines were to be declared of public utility and a convention with the Orleans Company had to be approved.

MM. Wilson and Laisant warmly attacked the great companies. M. Bethmont thought that the State should become the banker of small companies; M. Lecesne supported an immediate and general purchase by the State, which was opposed by MM. Léon Say and Christophle. These discussions were much more financial than political. The young Republic was considering "interests."

On an amendment supported by M. Allain-Targé, a friend of Gambetta, the Bill was referred back to the Committee to be remodelled.

The Lyons Crisis.

The industry of Lyons was at that time going through an extremely grave economical crisis. Numerous labourers were without work, and starving. Parliament, before adjourning, voted a sum of 500,000 francs destined to be spent in orders to the manufacturers of that city. Madame de MacMahon organised a gala evening at the Opera; Victor Hugo and Louis Blanc lectured in the theatre of the Château d'Eau. After those lectures, some disorder took place at the doors of the theatre, which revealed much excitement among the Parisian population.

III

Papal Consistory.

Pope Pius IX held, on the 12th March, a Consistory in which he recommended several Cardinals, in particular Mgr. Caverot, Archbishop of Lyons, nominated against Mgr. Dupanloup, who was the candidate of the French Government. On that occasion, the Pope pronounced a speech in which he protested against the Mancini Law on the abuses of the clergy, passed by the Italian Chamber but soon afterwards rejected by the Senate. A clause of that law specified that "the Tribunals might prosecute the publication of insulting words against the Italian Government, whatever the ecclesiastical authority from which they might emanate." The Pope saw in this a violation of the Law of guarantees, an obstacle to the liberty of pontifical speech. Pius IX was ageing; his moral sufferings had made him very sensitive; he had just lost Cardinal Antonelli and had replaced him by Cardinal Simeoni, who was awaiting an opportunity of asserting his fidelity to the policy of the Vatican. The Holy Father's address was full of effusions, objurgations and tears. The speech ended by an appeal to Catholic souls. "We desire nothing more earnestly than to see shepherds exhort the faithful to make use of all the means placed at their disposal by the Laws of our country, in order to influence the men who are in power, so that the latter should consider with more attention the painful situation of the Head of the Church, and that they should take efficacious steps to set aside all the obstacles which stand in the way of his entire independence." A few days later, Cardinal Simeoni, in a circular to the Nuncios, gave to this protest the diplomatic form of a complaint to the powers. Catholics in all countries became greatly excited. Petitions were drawn up.

Bishops addressed their Governments. In France, emotion reached its height. Easter was approaching with its Holy Week services. The sufferings of Christ and the sufferings of His Vicar were confounded in one religious sorrow.

On the 26th March, several Deputies and Senators from the Right saw the Duc Decazes and spoke to him of the aggravation of the Pope's position. The Minister evaded the subject with a few sympathetic words.

Ministers travel in Italy.

The Chamber was not sitting, it had adjourned for more than a month, from the 24th March to the 1st of May. The President of the Council, completely exhausted, announced that he was leaving Paris for some time. He left, in fact, on the 29th March, for Italy. M. Léon Say, the Minister of Finance, was going to Venice at the same time. It was said that the two travellers would take advantage of their stay in the Peninsula to see King Victor Emmanuel's Ministers, and to examine, with them, certain details of a pending commercial negotiation. When he reached Italy, M. Jules Simon concealed himself from public notice and took refuge for several days in the most absolute incognito. However, he met the King's Ministers, and an accord took place on the commercial question. The *Journal Officiel* published, a few weeks later (26th April), two letters exchanged between the Italian Ambassador in Paris and the French Foreign Minister, according to which the commercial treaty of the 17th January, 1863, and the Navigation Convention of the 13th June, 1862, were prolonged until the 31st December, 1877. M. Jules Simon received on the 9th April the Grand Cordon of the Order of Saint Maurice and Saint Lazarus.

Were other questions touched upon in those conversations? One thing is certain, viz.: that the journey of

the French Ministers was considered offensive by the Vatican. It was said that the two travellers had agreed with the Italian Ministers "as to the means of securing, in the future conclave, the triumph of Prussian influence," and the author[1] who seriously relates this saying adds, "The fall of M. Jules Simon soon followed upon his journey to Italy." In Paris, in the Premier's absence, alarming rumours concerning the fate of the Cabinet were beginning to spread.

Newspapers of the 6th April published the following note. "One of the correspondents of the *Indépendance Belge* writes to this paper that a Deputy of the Left heard M. le Vicomte Emmanuel d'Harcourt say to a Deputy of the Right in speaking of M. Jules Simon, 'You must have patience until the month of July, when we shall be rid of him.' We can declare that the honourable Secretary of the Presidency never held the language thus attributed to him, and has never said anything which could authorise anybody to credit him with such language."

Catholic Meeting.

On the 3rd April, the general meeting of Catholic Committees was to take place under the presidency of M. Chesnelong. This general meeting was called by a permanent group, the Catholic Committee of Paris, which had been authorised by a decree of the 4th April, 1874. Acting upon the instructions of the President of the Council, M. Voisin, *préfet* of police, announced the dissolution of the Parisian group. The Government informed M. Chesnelong that a general meeting of Catholic Committees would not be tolerated. It took place, nevertheless, but the meeting assumed a private character. M. Chesnelong made the opening speech. Cardinal Guibert gave the Pontifical benediction. An address to the Pope was worded thus:

[1] A. de Saint Albin, *Histoire du Pape Pie IX*, vol. iii., p. 508.

"By claiming independence for your ministry, your Holiness defends the cause of all Catholic nations, and especially that of France, eldest daughter of the Church." At the end of the Congress, a petition was signed, addressed to the President of the Republic, to the Ministers, Senators and Deputies. "In view of the grave situation of the Papacy, the undersigned French and Catholic citizens feel it their duty to have recourse to you. They ask you to use every means in your power to enforce respect for the independence of the Holy Father, etc., etc., etc." "Surely," writes M. de Meaux, "in the mind of the petitioners, the means to be employed should be peaceable ones. . . . The Left Press in France, the foreign Press in Italy and in Germany, apparently obeying common orders, nevertheless accused the French Catholics of seeking war. No imputation could have been better calculated to harm and to hurt them, and they rejected it with unanimous indignation." . . . This unanimity was not quite complete. Some imprudent voices, some newspaper articles gave an opening to the accusations of their adversaries. Mgr. Pie himself tried to appease this conflict. On the other hand, a colleague of Mgr. Pie, Mgr. Ladoue, Bishop of Nevers, directly addressed Marshal MacMahon and urged him to break away from all solidarity with the Italian Revolution. M. Jules Simon, in a circular to the *préfets*, blamed petitions and Pastoral letters. M. Martel, in another circular, addressed to the Bishops, pointed to the intrusion of the lay element in the direction of the Church.

The Left Press sharply criticised this "rising of episcopal shields." Some violence was taking place in the opposite camp. The *Radical* was brought before the Courts for the publication of a profane song published on the occasion of Good Friday.

Bye-election at Bordeaux.

A bye-election took place in Bordeaux on the 25th March. M. Mie, an extreme Radical, was elected by 7,271 votes against 6,148 to M. Caduc, a Moderate Republican, but with the assistance of the Extreme Right, who thus inaugurated a policy often applied since. M. Léon Say wrote from Venice: "I hear that at this very moment some pressure is being brought upon the Marshal to make him choose a Right Cabinet and to make him dissolve the Chamber; people are taking the Gironde election as a precedent." M. Jules Simon's absence was being used against him.

He returned on the 11th April. A magisterial promotion took place on the 18th April which did not seem sufficient even to the most Moderate. M. Jules Ferry attacked the Cabinet: "It is an open secret that the Élysée is punishing Justice for all the liberties which have had to be allowed to the Interior. The situation is rather similar, though more acute in character, to that which, at the beginning of last autumn's session, made sagacious minds foresee the inevitable fall of the Dufaure Cabinet."

M. Paul de Cassagnac was sentenced by the *Cour d'Assises* to two months' imprisonment and a fine of 2,000 francs. At the Sorbonne lectures of M. Saint-René Taillandier, students protested noisily against the terms used by the Professor in speaking of Robespierre and Danton. A panic was attempted, and it was said that the Banque de France had ordered its frontier branches to send their deposits to the central coffers.

A war had just burst out in the East between Russia and Turkey. Was it likely that France, so ill-prepared and so much divided, should be carried away by events? Business was bad. Fear reigned everywhere.

IV

The holidays, which were coming to an end, had brought irritation instead of pacification. Parties were angered at the same time by their own powerlessness and by the violence of others. Suspicion added to the disquiet of uncertainty. Things could not remain thus.

The Duc Decazes on Eastern Affairs.

Parliament reopened on Tuesday, the 1st May. The Duc Decazes read in the Senate and in the Chamber a declaration concerning Eastern affairs which ended thus: "In the Eastern question, the most absolute neutrality, guaranteed by the most scrupulous inactivity, must remain the basis of our policy. France wishes for peace, general peace, and we know that we may count upon your assistance to secure it." A Yellow Book was distributed. The declaration of the Duc Decazes was generally approved.

The Chamber had put down on its agenda the discussion of the Municipal Organisation Bill. It also seemed resolved to repeal the Law of 1875, but, first of all, that which preoccupied everybody had to be mentioned.

Motion against Ultramontane Intrigues.

On the 1st May, M. Leblond introduced a motion signed by the Presidents of the three Left groups, MM. Leblond, Laussedat and de Marcère, aiming at the "ultramontane intrigues." Those three united names proved that agreement existed between all the sections of the Republican party. The policy which rested upon their disagreement had failed.

The discussion was fixed for the 3rd May. The Comte de Mun took the offensive, and addressed, then and there, a question to the President of the Council. He denounced perturbed order, wounded consciences. "I ask the Government if it intends to accept any

solidarity with the organs of the majority. Is it necessary to remind you that, during that week which, from one end of the world to the other, millions of Christians call 'Holy Week,' there has been in the whole of that Press a sort of blasphemous rage, an impious fury which has stirred with shame and indignation all those who still respect the faith of their fathers, and that it remains so to this day without a voice being raised in the Councils of the Government to avenge the God of the Christians?" M. Jules Simon, declining all responsibility in the matter, begged the Comte de Mun to let the discussion of that question be joined to the Leblond motion. He was not at his ease.

M. Leblond spoke in favour of his motion on Thursday, the 3rd May. He alluded to the petition of the Catholics, quoted the "Mandamus" of the Bishop of Vannes and that of the Bishop of Nîmes. "Rome belongs to the Pope! Rome belongs to God!" He read articles from the Catholic and ultra-Catholic Press. "I believe, for my part," said M. Leblond, "that letters, kindly circulars, almost sympathetic measures are not sufficient. What is the opinion of the President of the Council?"

The Marquis de Valfons spoke in the name of the Catholics and answered the dangerous accusation of a desire for war. "On the eve of the election for the renewal of General Councils and of Municipal Councils, after having accused us of having tried to re-establish the former *régime*, it is attempted to make us pass for conspirators, anxious to cross the Alps with guns in order to overturn King Victor Emmanuel."

M. Jules Simon's Speech.

These two interventions did not make the task of the President of the Council too easy. His oratorical resources never failed him, his voice was gentle and more caressing than ever. His

stooping figure leant towards the audience which he had undertaken to charm and fascinate once again. His hand rested gently on the tribune. However, his pale face and drawn features revealed the anxiety which oppressed him. He knew that he was playing his last game. The Professor of æsthetics and philosophy, the great Liberal, the exquisite speaker was now face to face with the dilemma roughly set before him. . . .

M. Jules Simon repudiated with indignation the articles quoted from the tribune by M. Leblond; the Government wished to ensure all the legal rights of the Catholic religion and of the Catholic clergy; he himself professed "for the religion and the clergy, a deep and sincere respect." "Amen!" called out the rough voice of M. Benjamin Raspail. M. Jules Simon stated that the Catholic religion enjoyed under the Republic a favour and toleration which it had not had under former *régimes*, he disputed certain allegations of M. Leblond and contrary allegations of M. de Valfons; he made distinctions, differences, soothed and pleased his audience, surprised that such clever use could be made of nothing. He defended the Italian Government and the Mancini Law which was the origin of the crisis; "the starting-point of all these protests," said he, "is that his Holiness Pope Pius IX, is a prisoner in the Vatican. Let me be allowed to say that it is not accurate to state that the Pope is a prisoner, and that those reiterated declarations which are to be found in many newspapers, in many letters, are declarations, shall I say, false? . . . shall I say lying declarations? . . . I will be content to say that they are strangely exaggerated." And the speaker read from one end to the other, clause by clause, the Law of Guarantees, as if he had undertaken to plead before a French Chamber the cause of the Italian Government.

As he spoke, the watchful orator followed every slight

movement of the Left and of the Right, coquetting alternately with either side. He proved that the Pastoral letters of the Bishops and the petitions of the Catholic Congress were but the manifestations of an infinitesimal minority. Here is his peroration: "I have noticed during the whole of my speech, that I have met with no contradiction either on one side or the other when I said that the Catholic religion must enjoy every right in the spiritual order and that it must be surrounded with every respect, or when I added that if, in the name of the Catholic religion, any demonstrations should be attempted contrary to the interests of the country and to the Laws of the Republic, which are also the old Laws of the Kingdom of France, the Government will be absolutely resolved to oppose them and to enforce respect for the Law. Whatever be the flag under which we gather, the principle which must be imposed upon everybody is that of the Law, and we are here to make the Law be observed by all; and we shall make it be observed, not merely by sympathetic letters or kindly observations, but by an inflexible will and by our actions. . . .

". . . .We believe that it is the duty of all citizens to make for peace in every direction, and that is why I have watched over my speech in order to avoid a single word which might wound my hearers. This discussion was necessary, but it was especially necessary that it should be a calm one. . . . As for us, we have not only to watch over ourselves, to restrain, if necessary, our thoughts and our anger, we also have to see that this rule of patriotism should not be forgotten or misunderstood by any one. We would fail in our first duty if we allowed a thought to be uttered, an act to be committed which might, in any way, prejudice public peace, the peace of Europe. Such are the resolutions of the Government. I state

them to you as clearly as I can, so that no one outside should forget that every man should bow before the sovereignty of the Laws of the country, and that the Government is resolved to apply them if necessary in their full severity."

All this was uttered with the most perfect, the most fascinating tone and elocution, an easy flow of words, insinuating and graceful gestures. Some hearers, unable to resist the effect of such wonderful art, rose and left the hall.

The sitting ended in hesitation.

On the next day, M. Jules Ferry, whose name was down to speak, gave up his turn to Gambetta.

The whole Republican party understood the gravity of the moment. It had to remain united at all costs. Let the Leader speak.

It was not only the subject of the debate and the fate of the Cabinet which was in question, but the orientation of the Government and the destiny of the Republic. For some months, the drama had been prepared behind the scenes, it was now on the stage. The passion, the contrasted feelings which had slowly developed since the constitution of the Jules Simon Cabinet, surprise, indignation, fear of being wrecked in sight of port, everything contributed to excite the fiery statesman who piloted the party.

Gambetta's Speech.

When, with already heavy steps, he ascended the stairs of the tribune, when he pronounced his first words in a slightly hoarse voice, it was like the bursting out of the cry of Republican France. "I come to this debate with the frank resolve of going to the end . . . it is necessary that, once for all, in the name of our party, we should speak the whole truth. . . ." The delicate veils spun by the ingenious art of M. Jules Simon were already torn asunder.

The meaning of the speech can be expressed in two words. The question was not religion but politics. "Leaving on one side the problems of Canon Law in its relations with Civil Law, theological quarrels and religious passions, speaking to a political Chamber before a Government composed of political men, what we must do is to point out, to denounce, under the transparent mask of political quarrels, the political action of a political faction."

This shaft threw light upon everything.

The rest of the argument flowed with warm logic from this initial observation. It was "the too striking '*rapprochement*' between the exalted *personnel* of clerical agitation and the exalted *personnel* of the reactionary policy. . . ." "It is no less noteworthy that it should be the very same men, M. Ernoul, M. Depeyre, M. Chesnelong, who lead the assault against the institutions, against the Revolution of 1789, who are at the same time head of Catholic Committees, Catholic Clubs, Catholic Societies, and who cleverly, indefatigably mingling diplomacy with religion, politics with good works, make of all of those associated ideas the lever against the citadel of the State." The speaker showed that since the Council of the Vatican had met, unity in the Church was stronger than ever. He denied that the manifestoes of certain Bishops were the work of a minority. When Rome has spoken, all, without exception, priests, Bishops, everybody obeys. "It is intended to place the State in tutelage. The State has allowed itself to be interfered with. In addition, ministers of justice, ministers of public worship have come who have re-established the principles. The Church has resisted them all. The Church intends to keep and resume, one by one, all the rights which it claims." Did not the Pope, in a brief read aloud by the speaker, recently appoint the Bishop of Lydda Chancellor of the Catholic University of Lille, with power to confer

degrees and even to delegate this power? That extraordinary document had not been repressed, not even remarked upon. "It is because the clerical evil has deeply filtered among what we call the ruling classes; it almost always enjoys if not complicity, at least complacence from many State officials. It is that new situation of which we complain. The clearest result of those tactics is precisely to shake the compact which binds the State to the Church, the Concordat, outside which there are but two solutions, exclusion and separation. . . . Sympathetic remonstrance is not sufficient, we recall everybody to obedience to the Law. . . . If a prompt remedy is not adopted to resist the spirit of invasion and corruption, it will reach the goal which it has set itself, the conquest of the State and the direction of the masses. . . . Will you have the courage to say that the Republic is not in a state of legitimate defence, the courage to own that you are but a political faction trying to climb to power? . . ." Finally came the famous and somewhat brutal peroration. "I understand that M. de Valfons in the sincerity of his apprehensions was merely translating yours when he said, 'Oh! it is not the interest of the State which animates you, it is the wish to influence the elections.' The elections! Then you do feel and own that there is one thing which, equally with the former *régime* disgusts this country, disgusts the peasants of France, and that is the domination of clericalism. . . . You are right, and that is why, from this tribune, I say it to you, in order that it should be your condemnation before universal suffrage; and I merely express the feelings of the people of France when I say of clericalism what my friend Peyrat was saying one day: '*Clericalism, that is the enemy.*'"

Clericalism the Enemy.

Those were the words that the Left awaited. A thunder of applause burst out. Deputies

stood up and rushed towards the speaker as he descended from the tribune. The sitting was suspended.

The oratorical effect was considerable; the political bearings were immense: the ropes were cut.

An Article in the *Défense.*

M. Jules Simon had not drained the cup to the dregs. At the reopening of the sitting, M. Bernard Lavergne ascended the tribune to speak of a leading article published the day before in the *Défense* which seemed to justify every suspicion. The article stated that M. Jules Simon had received instructions to break with the Left and, in particular, to assume in the Chamber an attitude indicating his intention to have done with Radical violence. . . . "If, at the last moment, M. Jules Simon draws back, if he disguises in any way the intentions of the Government which he represents, we know what means to employ so as to force him to adopt the policy of religious and social protection in which he has failed hitherto. . . ."

The Marshal had had conversations with M. Jules Simon which might justify, in a certain degree, these dangerous allegations. "Now and then he would utter, half seriously and half in fun, phrases like the following: 'What a pity, Monsieur Jules Simon, that you should be so anxious to govern with the Chamber; if you would consent to do without, things would go much better and I would keep you for the whole of my Presidency.' 'I am a Republican,' answered Jules Simon, 'I govern with Parliament and with my party; otherwise I should not be here.' 'I know that, it is a great pity.'"[1]

To give to these conversations a character of ultimate pressure was a line of tactics well calculated to alarm the already uneasy mind of the President of the Council.

[1] Jules Simon, *Le Soir de ma Journée*, p. 124.

M. Jules Simon replied to M. Bernard Lavergne, who had not read out the article but had handed it to the President of the Chamber. The newspaper was handed to M. Jules Simon, who looked at it: "The first person who mentioned this to me," said he—"it was not the honourable M. Bernard Lavergne—told me that some analogy had been noticed between my words and the analysis previously published by the *Défense*, which seemed to give some authenticity to the account of this paper. . . . I am entitled to say that my honour is touched upon, since the author of the article supposes that, when I come to speak at this tribune, I do not come in order to express my own opinions, but to obey an order given to my words and to my conscience"—

M. Jules Simon Angry.

and, suddenly raising his voice with unexpected vehemence, his countenance flushed: "They cannot know what honour means! . . ." M. Jules Simon tore up the paper which he held, threw it on the floor and stamped on it. . . . (*Bravo! Bravo!—loud and general applause; some protests from the Right*) ". . . They cannot know what honour means who come in cold-blood to deny the honour, the truthfulness, the courage of a man, who, for the last forty years, has frankly and openly expressed his opinion on every subject and proclaimed the truth such as he sees it, with absolute disregard of the consequences." M. Jules Simon did not content himself with this fine show of indignation. He gave some explanations: "The respected name of the President of the Republic has been brought up in this article of the *Défense*. Well, this is a libel where he is concerned as well as where I am. . . . As I have had the honour of sitting in the Councils of the Government for the last five months, I cannot refrain from saying to the Chamber that the deep respect which, in spite of political disagreement, I have

always professed for the character of M. le Maréchal de MacMahon, has not ceased to increase since I have had the honour of knowing him more intimately, and I seize upon the opportunity which is offered to me of speaking of the respectful admiration with which his political conduct inspires me day by day. . . ."

In Praise of the Marshal.

These words, much applauded by the Centre and the Left, were pronounced on the 4th May.

The Comte de Mun replied to M. Jules Simon; his eloquent, frankly Catholic speech brought fresh fuel to the general excitement.

The Presidents of the three groups of the Left, MM. Laussedat, Leblond and de Marcère, had moved the following: "The Chamber, considering that ultramontane manifestations, of which the recrudescence might compromise the internal and external security of the country, constitute a flagrant violation of the Laws of the State, invites the Government, in order to repress this unpatriotic agitation, to make use of the legal means at its disposal."

The word "confidence" was not mentioned.

This motion was supported by Gambetta.

What was the Government to do?

"The moment was a critical one," wrote, at a later date, one of the members of the Government; "the sitting was suspended for a short time. The Cabinet did not know what line of conduct to adopt; the motion was perhaps almost acceptable, though it was too great a victory for M. Gambetta. But, at least, the sacramental word 'confidence' should be introduced. . . . It was impossible to obtain anything. M. Gambetta spoke as a master. He said, in my hearing, of Jules Simon and de Martel, what he was one day to say of the Marshal, 'They must submit or go.' The Ministers submitted."[1]

[1] Louis Passy, *Le Marquis de Blosseville*, p. 434.

M. Jules Simon ended by uttering these words, "The Government accepts the motion." M. Paul de Cassagnac said: "The Government does not accept it, but swallows it!" The motion was carried by 346 against 114. The Ministers who were Deputies had voted in favour of it. The Duc Decazes alone had abstained from voting.

M. Jules Simon had chosen. What was now to take place between the Marshal and himself? On the 3rd May, in the evening, after M. Jules Simon had delivered his first speech and before the intervention of Gambetta, the Marshal had sent for the President of the Council. "The only time when it ever happened."

The Marshal and M. Jules Simon.

"He told me," says M. Jules Simon, "that he had read my speech from one end to the other with unmixed pleasure. . . . As I was preparing to go he used the following words: 'I only reproach you with one thing, it is that you give too much heed to *those people*. We can do without them, we will govern together and we will give this country security and prosperity.' I answered that I was an obstinate partisan of Parliamentarism, and, as I spoke, *clouds rose between us like those cardboard clouds which stage carpenters put up and which completely hide from the spectators the back of the scene. . . .*"[1]

On the next day, M. Jules Simon tore up in the tribune the article in the *Défense*, spoke in dithyrambic terms of the Marshal-President, and accepted the motion of the Left. "It did not suit me," he writes, "especially after the Marshal's words, to fall on this question; but I said to Martel: 'Now we merely have to look for a favourable exit,'" and the writer adds, wittily, "The Marshal quite unexpectedly undertook to find it for us."

The Marshal was furiously angry with the boldness of the Lefts, with the intangible suppleness of M. Jules

[1] *Le Soir de ma Journée*, p. 242.

Simon, with his obstinacy in refusing to understand; angry, especially, at being praised by him. "The praise which he received from him at such a moment disgusted him. He wanted to dismiss him at once." He sent for the Duc de Broglie. The latter advised him against any hurried action: "He pointed out that, if a rupture with the Cabinet and, consequently, a conflict with the Chamber, which the Cabinet obeyed, had become inevitable, yet it was against the interest of the Church and against a favourable issue to the conflict that this should take place on a religious question. In order to persuade the Marshal to wait for another opportunity, he had to promise him that, if that opportunity should supervene, he would not fail him.[1]"

Illusions were no longer possible. A crisis was at hand. M. Émile de Girardin wrote on the 7th May, . . . "The policy of the Left Centre is a thing of the past. . . . More, there is now room in France but for two policies: the Republican policy and the Monarchical policy. In this respect, the vote of the 4th May, 1877, is a great and decisive victory; it has divided the Chamber of Deputies into two camps, that of the enemies of an Elective Government and of Religious liberty, and that of the enemies of Dynastic inheritance and Clericalism, making no distinction between the Head of the Cabinet, M. Jules Simon, and the Leader of the Majority, M. Gambetta."

In the Senate. In the Senate, the Right wished to end the matter at once; the ever-eager M. Chesnelong wanted to question the Government. It was again the Duc de Broglie who proved a pacificator. Mgr. Dupanloup also intervened. He declared, in his own name and in that of Cardinal Guibert, that "almost unanimously, the Bishops, considering the situation in

[1] De Meaux, *Souvenirs*, p. 310.

France, preferred that no debate should be raised concerning them at that moment." Shelter for the religious question was being sought in prevision of the great storm which was coming.

The Bishops.

Cardinal Guibert published, on the 9th May, a Pastoral letter in which he gave his appreciation of "the new situation created by the motion of the 4th May, in which the Government was associated." He gave counsels of moderation: "If the expression of our sorrow sometimes went beyond the limit because our hearts were overflowing, should this be called a crime? . . . In justice, no importance should be given to some slight exaggeration of language. . . . It is Catholicism which is attacked. It is Catholicism as a whole which is called 'the enemy!'" Cardinal Guibert, after the Comte de Mun, denied the reproach made to the Catholics of lacking patriotism. "After having protested in our name and in the name of France, our Mother, whose feelings are misunderstood when her cause is separated from ours, we will continue to learn from our Divine Master to vanquish injustice by patience and hatred by charity."

At Rome.

As for Pope Pius IX, he attacked not so much Gambetta's speech, as that of M. Jules Simon. He said, on the 11th May, to the French pilgrims who had come to Rome for his Jubilee: "If we look towards Europe, we see little cause for hope. What can be hoped, indeed, from those who have the courage to give a formal denial to the words of the Pope and to say that he is a liar?" (This was a direct allusion to the word *lying* pronounced by M. Jules Simon.) "Such language is absolutely improper; it is not worthy of a Catholic Government. I will not say which Government has said that, but I have read it."

The ultramontane newspaper, *Germania*, wrote, a few days later: "The Pope could not tolerate that the

President of the Council should give him the lie—however respectful the form—and he has determined to act. The Nuncio has received instructions to inform Marshal MacMahon that the Vatican had resolved to break all relations with France if M. Jules Simon remained a Minister," and the newspaper added: "The Pope has spoken and has been obeyed." In fact some letters were exchanged between the Vatican and the Marshal on the occasion of these events.

It now remained to find an occasion less directly compromising the religious cause: this was a question of time and opportunity.

V

The Marshal's Advisers.

Let us now look into the mind of those who had the strongest influence upon the Marshal. One of them, M. le Vicomte de Meaux, describes his own feelings with much clearness and force. "As for me," he says, "I did not hide from the Duc de Broglie that I was one of those who wished for the struggle. Not that I did not see the peril, but, since weapons still remained to us with which to defend, not only the cause of this or that Dynasty, but French Society itself, it seemed to me that the worst that could happen would be to let those weapons drop from our hands without having been used. Let not the Marshal, supported by the Senate, bind himself imprudently, but let him bind himself before everything was lost. . . . It was important that resistance should emanate from him, and it was important that this resistance should not be deferred too long, nor begun at the wrong time. Municipal Councils in all Communes and one-half of the General Councils and *arrondissement* Councils in all

Departments were to be re-elected in that very year, and one-third of the Senate one year later; if they should be elected under deleterious influence, the strongest point of resistance, the Senatorial majority, would fail the Marshal. The fact that some of the Right seats had been captured by the Left reduced this majority to a small number of votes; there was not much time to lose if it was to be preserved."[1]

The elections were more and more alarming. In Brittany itself, at St. Malo, M. Durand, a Republican, defeated by 7,347 votes M. de Kerloguen, a Legitimist, with 4,975 votes (6th May). Public and Parliamentary life was unbearable; the Press, unchained, kept up polemics of an extraordinary violence. In the Chamber, the Government was as if it no longer existed. On the 8th May, *à propos* of the dismissal of a religious schoolmistress, M. Jules Simon, questioned, was hardly allowed to answer; he was insulted. He cried from the tribune: "This is not a Parliamentary discussion but a pugilistic séance." The Bonapartist party intended to push things to extremes . . . M. Jolibois, M. Tristan Lambert, M. Paul de Cassagnac, did not leave the Government a minute's respite. Deputies left their benches and faced each other in the arena. The majority was decided to keep the debates under control, and the Presidents of the three Left groups introduced, on the 11th May, a resolution intended to amend the disciplinary insufficiency of the standing orders.

It was in the midst of this tumult that two Bills were tackled which were to form a ground of conflict for the two parties, the Municipal Organisation Bill and the Press Bill; in one word: the elections and public opinion.

[1] De Meaux, p. 312.

The Municipal Organisation Bill.

The Municipal Organisation Bill was discussed on its first reading, on Saturday, the 5th May. During the whole of the week, the debates continued in the midst of growing agitation. The Government was not even represented. The principal effort of the debate bore upon the publicity of sittings. The Vicomte de Meaux says: "The publicity of the sittings of Municipal Councils which, since then, has seemed harmless, at that time alarmed men of order; they had visions of violent and coarse disputes taking place in the villages and in the towns, of a revolutionary tumult," and M. de Marcère says in his turn: "Those fears astonish us now-a-days, as if we did not know the exaggerated importance which party fever gives to any question. . . ."

M. Raoul Duval called for M. Jules Simon (12th May). M. Méline came to say that M. Jules Simon was detained in Paris by a passing indisposition. The principle of publicity was voted by 216 against 165. On Monday, 14th May, the debate ended and the Chamber decided to pass on to a second reading.

The President of the Council was present at the sitting (Tuesday, 15th May). The Press Bill was discussed. The Committee merely asked that the Law of 1875 be repealed. At a Council Meeting, in the presence of the Marshal, M. Jules Simon had bound himself to resistance. Before the debate, he ascended the tribune. "The Cabinet would have preferred," said he, "that the Chamber should consider general Law." In any case, the Government saw some disadvantages in altering the Law of 1875, particularly in what concerned offences against Foreign sovereigns and nations.

The Right desired the maintenance of Police Court jurisdiction for Press offences. M. Albert Grévy, Reporter, claimed, amidst applause from the Left, the

repeal of the Law, which had never been considered by any one as anything but a provisional measure. M. Blin de Bourdon called upon M. Jules Simon to explain himself. "It is important to know whether, yes or no, the President of the Council is a partisan of the repeal." A cruel thorn in the old Liberal's flesh.

Uneasiness of the Left.

The Left began to be uneasy at the progress of affairs; it felt the danger of a too complete victory. The fate of the Cabinet was in suspense. M. Émile de Girardin led, in the *France*, a very lively campaign urging the majority to avoid, at any price, a Ministerial crisis: "It is better to postpone certain laws, even good ones, than to give an opening to the adversaries of the Constitution. . . ." He asked for a "few months' patience for the good of the Republic."

M. Jules Simon observed this wavering; he tried to take advantage of it. He made a very discreet allusion to the difficult situation in which he was placed by the attitude of the Marshal, a veiled confidence which was nevertheless understood. "The honourable Reporter of the Committee was, a moment ago, rendering justice to the motives which prevent the President of the Council from saying publicly in the tribune what he has said in the Committee, what all his colleagues know, what everybody knows. . . . If you wish to know his general opinion on the liberty of the Press, he does not hesitate to declare that it is what it has ever been, and that, when a Law is made on the liberty of the Press, that Law will be a Liberal one and he will be the first to support it. . . ." This was a clever manœuvre; a retreat, but not a defeat.

The Repeal of the Law of 1875 carried.

The Left hesitated. On a fresh motion of M. René Brice, Gambetta demanded that the report be referred to the Committee upon condition that it be presented again the next day. He

added significant words, from which it might be concluded that he knew something: "The night that you are going to spend, Gentlemen, will not be your last night." The referring back to the Committee was lost by 254 votes against 195; M. Laroche-Joubert exclaimed, "M. Gambetta is beaten!" That meant that evasions were no longer possible and that a decision must be taken. By 377 votes against 55, the repeal of the Law of 1875 was carried. Once more the 24th May was checkmated and the Marshal with it.

As to the Cabinet. . . .

The Chamber adjourned until Thursday, the 17th May.

VI

The Letter of the 16th May.

On the 15th May, after the sitting, M. Jules Simon spent the evening at the theatre. He returned to the Ministry, Place Beauvau, after midnight. On the next morning, early, he came down to his study and noticed at one glance, on his table, a small letter lying there alone. "How did it get there? It seemed to me strange; it bore no postmark; the handwriting was unknown to me; I opened it."

MONSIEUR LE PRÉSIDENT DU CONSEIL,

I have just read in the *Journal Officiel* the account of yesterday's sitting. I saw with surprise that neither you nor the Keeper of the Seals had given out from the tribune all the grave reasons which might have prevented the repeal of a Law on the Press voted less than two years ago, on the proposition of M. Dufaure, and of which you yourself, quite recently, demanded the application; and yet, at several meetings of the Council, at that of yesterday morning even, it had been decided that the President of the Council, as well as the Keeper of the Seals, should undertake to oppose it.

Already it had been a source of astonishment that the Chamber of Deputies at its recent sittings, should have discussed the whole Municipal Bill and even adopted some provisions of which, in the Council of

Ministers, you yourself had acknowledged the great danger, such as the public meetings of Municipal Councils, without any part being taken in the discussion by the Minister of the Interior.

Such an attitude on the part of the Head of the Cabinet makes it a question whether he has preserved the necessary influence in the Chamber to make his views prevail.

An explanation regarding this is indispensable, for, if I am not, as you are, responsible towards Parliament, I have some responsibility towards France, which now, more than ever, I must keep in mind.

Accept, Monsieur le Président du Conseil, the assurance of my highest consideration.

The President of the Republic,
MARSHAL MACMAHON.

M Jules Simon, whose account is not always very precise, says that this letter had been written and left at his house on the evening of the 15th May. "It was in the evening; I was not at home. I only came back to the Ministry after midnight." It is enough to read the letter to notice that it was written on the 16th, in the morning, since it is dated on that very day, and since it mentions the *Journal Officiel* in which the sitting of the 15th was published.

Other allegations of M. Jules Simon must also be received with some reserve: "They gave him" (the Marshal) "a prepared letter; he copied it without a mistake . . . he had it taken to my house in a moment of anger, etc." [1]

M. Jules Simon had also wrongly asserted, as he himself acknowledged later, that there had been a direct intervention from Mgr. Dupanloup.

Mgr. Dupanloup was not in Paris on the evening of the 15th May.

M. de Marcère had yet another account from Colonel Robert, at that time General Secretary at the Elysée. The Marshal, reading the *Journal Officiel* on the morning of the 16th May, had been strangely impressed by the attitude of the Ministers. . . . "All those who had to do

[1] *Le Soir de ma Journée*, pp. 242 *et seq.*

with him know that he was subject to fits of impatience. . . . He had complained that the promises made in the Council of Ministers were not being kept. It was about eight o'clock. Nobody had yet arrived at the Élysée except General Broye. . . . 'Look here,' he said to him, 'sit there, in your place, and write.' He dictated a letter addressed to M. Jules Simon and had it taken round immediately. . . . It was the Marshal himself, and he alone, who, after reading the *Journal Officiel*, under the influence of the irritation produced by this reading, had accomplished the action which became so important in its consequences. . . ."

Here are the facts: The Marshal received a telegraphic report of the sitting, as is usual, whilst it was going on. After dinner, he sent to the Duc de Broglie a high official from the Élysée; the Duc de Broglie was in bed, reading the works of Tacitus. He came to the Marshal about midnight. The conversation was prolonged late into the night. If the letter was only dictated to General Broye on the morning of the 16th, the night passed on the resolution taken without modifying it. However, the letter having been sent on the 16th, in the morning, to Place Beauvau, there was a moment of hesitation and somebody was sent to take it back; M. Jules Simon already had it in his hands.

These details show that the action was not spontaneous, but had been decided upon for several days. At the last moment, it was carefully weighed and thought out.

A last Interview.

The letter of the Marshal asked for "an explanation." M. Jules Simon understood that it meant "resignation." But he might either accept at once or wait until after the sitting in the Chambers: "I went at once to the Marshal," he writes, "thinking that at that early hour I should not be received. But he received me: I should have preferred that he had not

done so. I had his letter in my hand. I told him that I had no explanations to give, and that, by coming to the house, I had only wished to preserve the external forms of courtesy. . . . I asked him if he intended to publish his letter. Then, said I, I will publish my answer." It would seem that here again M. Jules Simon was misled by his memory, for M. Jules Ferry has given, in a letter published by the *Gironde*, at the very time, a different story which seems to have originated with M. Jules Simon himself. M. Jules Simon had taken to the Élysée his answer already written. "In the interview which took place, the Marshal, according to his custom, let him speak without interrupting him. When he had finished, he said to him, 'Monsieur le Ministre, I accept your resignation,' adding . . . 'I am a man of the Right: we could no longer work together. I would rather be overthrown than remain under the orders of M. Gambetta.' This account is true, word for word," says M. Jules Ferry; "I cannot repeat enough that I am writing practically under dictation from persons who possess undeniable information." [1]

M. Jules Simon went afterwards to the Place Saint-Georges to see M. Thiers. He had arranged to go to two funerals on the morning of the 16th, that of Ernest Picard and that of Taxile Delord. He would not give up going to either: and it was by his confidences to friends whom he met that the news of what was going on began to spread in Paris.

The Duc Decazes, who feared that these events might react on the external situation, offered to intervene with the Marshal, but M. Jules Simon thought that there was nothing to be done. He had called a Council of Ministers for one o'clock; the Ministers asserted the solidarity of the Cabinet.

[1] Jules Ferry, *Discours et Opinions*, vol. ii.

M. Jules Simon had handed to the Marshal the letter in which he offered his resignation.[1] There was no other issue possible. "I have been reproached," writes M. Jules Simon later, "with not having waited until the morrow to carry the question between the Marshal and myself to the Chamber. . . . Resistance would have provided the *camarilla* with an opportunity of saying that an insurrection could only be answered by a *Coup d'État*. . . . This idea of a *Coup d'État* was in everybody's mind. . . . By retiring thus, I left the Marshal to face the Constitution which he had sworn to represent, I left him to face the Parliament, to face the country: and I say, after seventeen years have passed, that I did right."[2]

The Marshal's "Mission."

Marshal MacMahon laboured under the fixed idea that the National Assembly had chosen him to prevent the advent of extreme ideas and of what was called Radicalism. Those ideas were, in the eyes of the Marshal, personified by Gambetta, therefore he intended to ignore Gambetta: on that point he was adamant.

He went about repeating that neither had he consented to enter into relations with the Comte de Chambord. The analogy was perhaps not so close as he thought. Gambetta was the Leader of the majority in the Chamber of Deputies. Would Marshal MacMahon have refused to support the Comte de Chambord if the majority in the National Assembly had pronounced in favour of the exiled Prince?

However this may be, the President of the Republic having decided not to turn to the Left for his new

[1] The text of this letter will be found in *Jules Simon, sa vie et son œuvre*, 1887, p. 222.

[2] *Le Soir de ma Journée*, pp. 247–249.

Ministers, the normal course of the Government was hampered. The Chamber, on the other hand, during the crisis which had preceded the formation of the Jules Simon Cabinet, had remained, so to speak, permanent, in order to assert its will; it intended to govern through the Cabinet; it intended to have the last word.

What was to be the issue? Resignation or Dissolution?

The Marshal did not contemplate resignation. Gambetta and Radicalism were perhaps masters of the Chamber, but the Upper Chamber and the Executive Power both thought that therein lay public danger. Now, the Constitution had handed to the Executive and to the Senate in agreement, precisely in view of a similar situation, a paramount power: that of making a solemn appeal to the country by means of Dissolution.

They had one weapon, one resource: their duty was, not to give way, but to stand firm; not to temporise, but to act.

The country, when electing the majority in the Chamber, had not forgotten the name of the Marshal; on the contrary, it had proclaimed that name. If Deputies belonging to the Moderate Left, after having invoked that illustrious patron, were now making common cause with the Advanced groups, that attitude, due to certain special causes and, in particular, to the influence of M. Thiers, in no wise proved that the will of the nation itself was in disagreement with the policy of the President, that policy being clearly explained.

The "Policy of the President."

"The policy of the President." There was "a policy of the President." The Constitution had admitted it; the Constitution had wished it, since it had admitted, wished, sanctioned the "Septennate." This was perhaps a somewhat obscure compromise and certainly a merely provisional *régime*,

but it had been deliberately sanctioned, and it formed the basis of the Constitution.

There was no possible doubt. The Wallon amendment, voted in opposition to the Casimir-Perier motion, established the Republic as a sequel, an explanation, a prolongation of the Presidential "Septennate "The President of the Republic is elected . . . etc., etc.' The whole Constitution was epitomised in one title: who could dispute the authority of the man who held it?

Another higher reason justified the Marshal in his own eyes, that of public good: "The Marshal was convinced that the triumph of Radicalism would be hurtful to France; that French finance, restored with so much effort, the Army, of which the organisation was scarcely completed, would be delivered into the hands of men without experience and, perhaps, without scruples, and religious peace would be threatened. He feared, above everything, for the external prestige of the country; he dreaded the hostile and distrustful reception that Europe, which had grown favourable, thanks to clever diplomacy on our part, would give to a Radical Government." [1]

Should we add that, in Marshal MacMahon's immediate surroundings, Royalist ideas had many representatives, and that the most ardent of his counsellors were determined to take the first opportunity to play the last card before Republican institutions were finally strengthened by the coming election? It has been said that the 16th May had been a spontaneous action on the part of the Marshal; it has been said and repeated that the Ministers appointed by him on the next day were the first to be surprised. Such explanations, given after the event, are neither accurate nor honourable. When risks have been run, responsibilities must be assumed.

[1] Unpublished private document.

The 16th May was a political action, an action which might pass as Constitutional; it had been foreseen and announced; it was deliberate. The Marshal was not alone during the night when he formed his resolution. His action was neither absurd nor illegal: it did not succeed, that is all.

It did not succeed and it could not succeed because it was imprudent, bold, contrary to the movement which bore the nation and which had imposed upon the National Assembly itself. A man cannot stand alone against the country. The "Septennate" alone was not stronger than the monarchy and the Assembly. The action did not succeed, and it could not succeed, because those who accomplished it, to begin with the Marshal, were neither mad enough, nor unworthy enough, to push it to the end and to set the country on fire or in irons. The letter of the 16th May was not unconstitutional: it was the inevitable, logical corollary of the Constitution. The Constitution of 1875 had attempted to combine the Republic and the Monarchy; it had attempted to consolidate what was provisional and to fix what was transitory. While recognising the Sovereignty of the People, it attempted to hold it in with the bridle. The life, the power, the opinion of one man had been raised to the rank of "State Rights." Thus had precariousness been included in the organism; ruin could not but follow.

The 16th May was the supreme sanction of the ultimate tergiversations of the National Assembly. The dying majority had wished its incoherent thought to survive it. It therefore survived to perturb everything as it had itself been perturbed. History is logical, it arrives late and slowly, like Justice, but it follows a straight road and reaches its goal.

The 16th May was the inevitable crisis of the inter-

pretation of the Constitution of 1875. The good M. Wallon had left the germ of it inside the egg. The letter of Marshal MacMahon, abrupt, clear, loyal, like his character, set the inevitable problem.

It was for the nation to solve it.

END OF VOL. III.

INDEX

Administrative changes of 1876, 499
Agriculture—
  Disease of vines, 63, 64, 65
  Prize offered for destruction of *Phylloxera*, 65
Algiers—Suppression of martial law, 410
Allain-Targé, M., Radical programme drawn up, 455
Alsace-Lorraine, Political effects of loss of, 423, 424
Alton Shée, d', Funeral of, 4
Annam—Treaty signed at Saigon, 95
Arbitration—Propaganda of Mr. Richard, 98
Army, The—
  Attitude towards the democratic spirit, 524
  Bill passed modifying military judicial code, 271
  Billeting, 61
  Calling out of the Reserve, 1875, 371
  Committee formed for study of Staff Bill, 60
  Funeral Honours Bill, 536
  Horses—Law authorising compulsory purchase, 61
  Introduction of Bill by M. Laisant for suppression of the *Volontariat*, 502
  Manœuvres of 1876—Introduction of Reservists, 528
  Measures for protection of Eastern frontier, 61
  Military reform, 581
  Motion for suppression of chaplains, 586
  M. Naquet's programme for universal military service and suppression of permanent armies, 453
  Non-commissioned officers—General Chareton's Bill, 60
  Organisation of Rifle Clubs, 61
  Paris as military centre of France, 61
  Political influences upon military conduct, 527
  Raising of the question of limitation of armaments, 215
Arnaudeau, General—Representative of French Government at Brussels Conference, 99
Arnim, Count Harry d', Trial of, 103
Art—Revival of Interest, 105
Audiffret-Pasquier, Duc de—
  Elected President of Senate, 570
  Election as President of the Assembly—His opening speech, 203
  Relations with Goulard, 6
  Speech on the dissolution of the Assembly, 411, 412
Aumale, Duc de—Personality, 39
Austria—Attitude in the Eastern question, 87
Azy, M. Benoist d', superseded by M. Michaux as Director of the Colonies, 575

Ballot, Mode of, 278, 279
Bardoux, M.—Views on Education question, 119, 120
Batbie, M., Gambetta's description of, 13. (See also Committee of Thirty.)
Baude, Baron—Representative of French Government at Brussels Conference, 99
Baudry, Paul—Frescoes for the Opera House, 105
Bérenger, M.—Speech on the Parliamentary Electoral Bill, 8
Bert, M. Paul—
  Motions in favour of popular education, 492
  Speech against ecclesiastical influence in Education, 116
Berthaut, General, appointed Minister for War, 525
Bismarck, Prince—
  Attitude towards Clericalism, 76, 77, 78
  Attitude during Russia's Intervention, 1875, 247
  Conversation with Prince Orloff, 74, 75

Bismarck, Prince (*continued*)—
Duchesne Incident, The, 211
Grievances against Gortschakoff, 85
Intervention in Spanish affairs, 82
Murderous attack on, at Kissingen, 77
Protests against opinions of Pius IX on the Kulturkampf, 211
Repudiation of alleged desire for war in 1875, 255–260
Rigorous treatment of France after the war, 103
Blanc, M. Louis—
Attitude towards Universal Suffrage, 12, 13
Address in Paris, 453
Views of, in January 1875, 147, 151, 153
Blowitz, M. de—Letter to the *Times*, 239–241
Bonapartist Party—
Antagonism between Democratic and Clerical Bonapartism, 461
Attack upon, 39
Attitude during the Election of Life-Senators, 395
Conversion of M. Raoul Duval, 263
Creation of the Central Committee of Appeal to the People, 196, 434
Election of M. de Bourgoing annulled, 268
Election of MM. Delisle, Béhic and Duval in the Gironde, 449
Electoral triumph of, 7
Hostility of—The Le Noury incident, 367, 368
Imperialistic agitations, 179
Inquiry into the Bourgoing election, 267–271
Parliamentary inquiry into the Nièvre election, 195, 196
Position of, 120–123
Reaction in favour of, 196, 197
Bonnechose, Cardinal de—Interview with MacMahon, 530
Bort, M. Teisserenc—Proposed scheme for International Exhibition, 494
Bourbons. (See titles Monarchical Party and Comte de Chambord.)
Bourbon Party, Claims of, 324. (See also Monarchical Party.)
Bourgeoisie, The—
Culture of, 423
Position of, 334
Bourgoing, Baron Philippe de, Election of, 7, 123
Bourgoing, M. de—Election annulled, 268
Brisson, M. Henri—
Adoption of programme of the Radical Republic, 455
Views on the position of M. de Mun; denunciation of "clerical conspiracy," 490
Broglie Cabinet, Fall of, 2
Broglie, Duc de—
Attitude towards the Septennate, 32
Blocking of the path of Gambetta, 466
Hesitation in voting on Public Powers Bill, 193, 194
Speech against the Casimir-Perier proposition, 44, 45
Broglie, Duc de (senior)—*Vues sur le Gouvernement de la France*, 318, 320
Brun, M. Lucien—
Amendment on the Municipal Electorate, 21
Motion of reconciliation between Monarchical parties, 9
Speech of January 1875, 137
Budget. (See Finance.)
Buffet, M.—
Attack on the Left, 405, 406
Bourgoing election, attitude towards, 268
Cabinet of, 201
Character, 198, 199
Election, 197
Election as Life-Senator, 512
Policy of, 180
Quadruple electoral defeat, 463, 465, 466
Re-election as President of Assembly, 1875, 124
Reply to Gambetta upon Electoral Bill, 385
Rupture with Left Centre, 365
Bülow, Herr v.—Conversation with Gontaut-Biron, 237, 238
Burmah—Visit to MacMahon of Burmese Embassy, 96

Caillaux, M.—Minister for Public Works, 7
Carlist difficulties, 83
Carnot, M. Sadi—Candidature in the Côte d'Or, 456
Casimir-Perier, M.—
Candidature at Nogent-sur-Seine, 456
Character and Career, 23, 24
Motion for the Republican Interests, 22, 42–48
Cassagnac, M. Paul de—
Action of General de Wimpffen, 197
Imperialistic views of, 462

Cassagnac, M. Paul de (*continued*)—
Violent articles on Liberty of the Press, 587
Caverot, Mgr.—Consecrated Archbishop of Rheims, 529
Chabaud La Tour, General Baron de—
Appointment as Minister of the Interior, 40
Reporter of Army Committee of 1874, 61
Chabrol, M. de—Appeal against Suffrage Bill, 30
Challemel-Lacour, M.—
Speech against ecclesiastical influence in Education, 117, 118
Speech on Martial Law, 409
Chambord, Comte de—
Circulation of letter confirming policy of Legitimists, 110
Monarchical Manifesto, 31
Proclamation of unity of the Bourbons by adhesion to manifesto of Don Carlos, 82
Reception of Legitimist deputation at Gorlitz, 584
Changarnier, General—Death, 579
Chaplains, Military, Motion for suppression of, 586
Chareton, General—Bill for improving condition of non-commissioned officers, 60
Chaudordy, M. de—Accredited ambassador to Government of Serrano, 83
Chesnelong, M.—
Amendment for Higher Education Bill, 264, 265
Defeat at Orthez, 506
Election as Life-Senator, 539
Chevalier, M. Michel—Concession for submarine railway, 272
Childreff's Labour Question, 69
China—Difficulties with Japan about Formosa, 96
Christophle, M.—Address in Orne, 458
Church—Roman Question. (See this title.)
Cialdini, General—Italian Minister in Paris, 530
Cissey, General de—
Affaire of the Rue des Postes, 522
Cissey Cabinet, Defeat of, 37
Minister of War, 6
Resignation of Cissey Cabinet, 197
Resignation of War Ministry, 525
Clemenceau, M. Georges—
Amnesty question, The, 503
On the election of Mayors, 454
Colonies, The—
Comores, Société des, 535
Right of representation granted to Guiana and Senegal, 582
Colonial Policy, Extension of—Speech of M. Georges Périn, 95. (See also Foreign Policy.)
Committee of Thirty—
Constitutional Bill, 41
Decision as to the Casimir-Perier Proposition, 42
Election of new members, 263
Precaution against Universal Suffrage, 49, 50
Report of M. Batbie as to Universal Suffrage, 12
Resignation of, 263
Commune, The—
M. Clemenceau on the Amnesty, 503
Pardons for convicts of, 571
Prosecutions Bill, 539, 540
Constans, M.—Address at Toulouse, 457
Constitution, The—
Analogies with America, 288
Conference at the Élysée, 1875, 127–129
Considered in its relation to French History, 355–357
History of constitutional change, 1800–1848, 301–305
Precedents of great Revolution, 291–301
Preparations for completion of, 272–281
Study of the theory of, 283–362
Study of the 1848 Revolution, 305–312
Constitutional Crisis of 1875, 124–210
Comores, Société des, 535
Corcelle, M. de—Resignation of, 530
Corsica—Corsican elections, 461
Crédit Foncier, Regulations for, 574
Cumont, M. de—Minister of Public Instruction and Worship, 6

David, Félicien, Funeral of, 527
Decazes, Duc—
Anxiety caused by trial of Count von Arnim, 103, 104
Candidature as a Constitutionalist, 458
Conciliatory Policy, 220, 225
Declaration on Eastern affairs, 596
Letter on Constitutional crisis, 1875, 130
Letter to General Le Flô, 103, 104
Letter to Le Flô, 226, 227
Minister for Foreign Affairs in Dufaure Cabinet, 481
Minister for Foreign Affairs, 6, 73, 74
Public prejudice against, 577, 578
Recognition of the good offices of Russia and England, 1875, 250, 251

Decazes, Duc (*continued*)—
Reproaches from Gambetta, 176
Solution of difficulties between France and Spain, 83, 84
Views on the Suez Canal question, 94
Views upon the Eastern question, 87, 88
Decentralisation, 322
Democracy—
Defects of, 349, 350
Definition of Plutarch, 325
School of, 317, 318
The Democratic *Régime*, 325, 330
Views of de Tocqueville, 315, 316
Deputies, Chamber of—
Constitution of 1876, 471
Deputies at Versailles, 475, 476
Opening Ceremony after elections of 1876, 471-473
Derby, Lord—Suez Canal question, On the, 93. (See also Disraeli.)
Dervieu, M. Edouard—Action in Egyptian financial crisis, 389
Disraeli—Cordiality towards France, 90, 91
Douanes, The—New General Tariff, 575
Dufaure, M.—
Amnesty question, The, 504, 505
Appointment as Vice-President of the Council, 466
Attitude towards Papal Investiture Bill, 529
Circular of 1876, 437
Consultation of M. de Goulard with, 6
Fall of Dufaure Cabinet, 540, 541, 542
Letters to MacMahon, 542, 550
Personality, 478-480
Speech in the Chamber of Deputies after the elections, 472
Speech on the Electoral Bill, 379, 380
Speech on Public Worship Bill, 537, 538
Speech upon Ventavon Bill, 166
Dufaure Cabinet, Composition of, 481, 482
Dupanloup, Mgr.—
Attitude towards Higher Education, 115, 116
Founding of *La Défense Sociale and Réligieuse*, 529
Views on Higher Education Bill, 264. (See also Religious question and Roman question.)
Duprat, M. Pascal—
Amendment on Education Bill, 119, 120
Amendment on Senate Bill, 171
Duval, M. Raoul—
Attack upon the Orleanists, 407
Duval, M. Raoul (*continued*)—
Bonapartist sentiments, 460, 461
Joins the Imperialists, 263
Speech in favour of Universal Suffrage, 190
Duval, M. Raoul (senior)—Election in the Gironde, 449

Eastern question—Demands of Roumania, 87. (See also Foreign Policy.)
Education—
Beginning of popular Education Campaign, 492
Bill on freedom of Higher Education, 112-120
Facilities for State Education, 371
Founding of five free Universities, 267
Question of University Degrees, 519
Reform of Secondary Teaching, 71, 72, 73
Renewal of Debate on Higher Education Bill, 264-267
Salaries raised of Elementary Teachers, 281
Schools Fund, 582
Treatise of M. Wyrouboff, 432
M. Waddington on Educational Reforms, 500, 501
M. Waddington's Bill for Primary Education, 575
Waddington Bill rescinding clauses XIII. and XIV. of Law of 1875 on the liberty of Higher Education, 509, 510
Egypt—
Financial difficulties, 93, 389
Internationalisation of, 95
Purchase of shares in the Canal by England, 390
Report of M. de Plœue concerning position of French subjects in, 95
Election of 1876, Results of, 442-444, 463, 470
Elections, The—
Adoption of the *Scrutin d'arrondissement*, 382
Ballot System, 373, 374
Bye-Elections of 1874, 108
Bye-Elections of 1875, 196
Bye-Elections of 1876, 501, 506, 507, 527
Corsican Elections, 461
General feelings in 1876, 420, 421
Invalidations of 1876, 487, 488
Local and Departmental, 109
Electoral Age—
Amendment of M. de Lafayette, 21, 22

Electoral Age (*continued*)—
Debate upon, 21, 22
Views of M. Thiers, 13
Electoral Bill, The—Debate upon, 376–388
Electoral Bill of 1875—Plural candidatures admitted, 277
Electoral Organisation of 1876, 434–437
Élysée, The, Policy of, 507, 508
Position of the Élysée as Presidential residence, 476, 477
England—
Anxiety as to Franco-German relations, 248, 249
British intervention in the Egyptian difficulties, 389, 390
Cordiality towards France of the Queen and of Disraeli, 91
Effect upon Lord Derby's Cabinet of the Franco-German friction, 233
Gordon in the Soudan, 97
Opposition to the Suez Canal, 91, 92
Opposition of, in International Military Conference, 101
Possession of the Fiji Islands, 97
Exhibition, International—Proposal for, 494

Factories—Inspectors appointed, 70
Fallières, M. Armand—Candidature at Nérac, 456
Fashions in Dress, 106
Faure, M. Felix—Defeat at Le Havre, 456
Favre, M. Jules—Speech of Jan. 1875, 139
Ferry, M. Jules—
Attitude in debate on Municipal Electoral Bills, 20, 21
Candidature in the Vosges, 457
Criticism of MacMahon, 548
Speech on Freemasonry, 433
Speech in support of exclusive rights of the State in Higher Education, 265, 266
Views on Education question, 119, 120
Finance—
Budget Committee, 1876, 534
Budget Committee for 1877, 572, 573
Budget of 1875, 57–59
Budget of 1876, 281, 282
Budget of 1877, 523, 524, 566
Credit opened for construction of hall for Chamber of Deputies, 271
Conversion of the Morgan loan, 260
Debate on Monetary question, 492
Draft for Budget of 1877, 493, 494
Fiscal motions, 579, 580
Increased prosperity, 282
Liquidation Account, 59
Finance (*continued*)—
M. Magne's corrective Budget, 1874, 57, 58
Regulations for the Crédit Foncier, 574
Floods—
In Paris and neighbourhood, 492
In Southern France, 271, 272
Floquet, M. Charles—
Founder of Republican League of the Rights of Paris, 210
Political views at the Senatorial Elections, 454
President of Paris Municipal Council, 210
Sentiments of Republican party, 568, 569
Foreign Policy—
As result of Home Policy, 311
Bismarck and Prince Orloff, 74, 75
Declaration of Decazes on Eastern question, 596
Difficulties caused by Home parties, 102
Duc Decazes, Minister for Foreign Affairs, 73, 74
Friendly overtures from Russia, 88, 89
New impetus to Colonial policy; Speech of M. Georges Périn, 95, 96
Pacific policy in the East, 533
Ratification of treaty between France and Annam, 95
Sentiments voiced by International Exhibition, 494
Foreign Relations—
Attitude of England in the Egyptian financial crisis, 388, 392
Cordiality of Disraeli's Cabinet 1874, 90, 91
Decided Peace Policy of Russia, 230
Effect of M. de Blowitz's letter to the *Times*, 242
Egyptian finance, 549
Friction with Germany, 212–220
Friendly attitude of the Czar and Gortschakoff, during the friction between France and Germany, 1875, 218–220
Interest in Carlist movement, 83
M. Jules Simon in Italy, 592
Open opposition of Germany, 90
Powers of President regulated with regard to, 276
Solution of difficulties between France and Spain, 84
The Czar and General Le Flô, 229
Visit of Burmese Embassy, 96
Franclieu, Marquis de—Dissentient feeling towards new Constitution, 280

Freemasonry—
Jules Ferry's speech, 433
Political history of, 430–433
Frémy, M.—Resignation as Director of the Crédit Foncier, 574
"Freycinet Plan" (see Railways), 62
Frohsdorf. (See Legitimists.)
Frontier, the Eastern—Measures for protection, 61
Fourichon, Admiral—Affair of the *Société des Comores*, 535
Fourtou, M. de—
Constitutional demands of, 38
Minister of Interior, 6
Resignation, 40
Speech against M. Le Brun's motion, 35
Funeral Honours Bill, 536

Gambetta, M.—
Anti-clerical speech at Lille, 447, 448
Appeal at Auxerre, 4
Attitude towards Left Centre, 4
Attitude towards Ventavon Bill, 169
Attitude in the Girerd Incident, 17
Chairman of the Budget Committee, 493, 494
Description of M. Batbie in debate on Universal Suffrage, 13
Electoral victories in Paris, Marseilles, Lille, and Bordeaux, 463
Enumeration of Republican programme at Bordeaux, 449
Lack of confidence in Buffet Cabinet, 270
La République Française, opinion on Casimir-Perier motion, 49
Letter to Lyons, 369, 370
Murderous attack of the Comte de Sainte-Croix, 18
On the Science of Politics, 450, 451
Policy of Moderation, 531
Position after the 1876 Elections, 477
Relations with MacMahon, 557
Reproaches addressed to Duc Decazes, 175, 176
Speech at Aix, 437, 438
Speech on Electoral Bill, 380–382, 384, 385
Speech at funeral of Edgar Quinet, 204, 205
Speech at Lyons, 466–469
Speech at Ménilmoutant, 208, 209
Speech on the Republican Institution, 51
Gap, Bishop of—Pastoral letters advocating political neutrality of the clergy, 529
Gatineau, M.—Prosecutions Bill, 534
Germany—Ecclesiastical difficulties, 76, 77, 78
Gracious reception in Spain of German mission, 83
Influence of German thought in France, 114
Militant Speech from the Throne, 90
Mission of von Radowitz to Russia, 221–225
Girardin, Émile de—
Manager of *La France*, 52
Speech on the Republic, 52
Gontaut-Biron, M. de—Conversation with Herr v. Radowitz, 222, 223
Interview with Herr v. Bülow, 237, 238
Gordon, General—Appointment as Governor-General of the Soudan, 97
Gortschakoff, Prince—
Difficulties with Bismarck, 85
Visit to Le Flô, 218
Goulard, M. de—
Cabinet of, 5
Death of, 18, 19
Grévy, M. Jules—
Candidature for Dôle, 455
Election as President of the Chamber, 569
Hostility towards institution of President, 187
Grivart, M.—Minister for Agriculture, 6
Gudin, M.—Defeat of, as Republican, 7
Guiana—Right of Representation, 582
Guibert, Cardinal Archbishop—Publication of letter against Government of Victor Emmanuel, 79
Guibert, Cardinal. (See Religious question.)

Haussonville, Vicomte Othenin d'—Speech on Universal Suffrage, 10
Hohenlohe, Prince v.—
Character. Conversation with Decazes, 230, 231
Second interview with Decazes, 234–236
Holland—Atchin campaign, 96
Horse-racing, 106
Horses—Law organising compulsory purchase for the Army, 61
Hugo, Victor—
Election in Paris, 439
Speech on the Amnesty question, 505

Imperial, Prince—
Attitude towards Prince Jerome, 122
Support of M. Rouher at Ajaccio, 461
International Arbitration, Propaganda for, 98

International Military Conference at Brussels, 98, 99, 100
International Sanitary Conference at Vienna, 101

Japan—Treaty with China, 1874, 96
Jarnac, Comte de—Appointment as Ambassador to London, 90
Jaubert, Comte—Introduction of Bill on Higher Education, 115
Jerome, Prince—
Candidature for Ajaccio, 122
Replaces M. Rouher at Ajaccio, 488
Jomini, Baron de—President of International Military Conference, 99
Jouin, M.—Appeal in favour of Universal Suffrage, 29

Kerjégu, Admiral de—Elected Deputy for Côtes du Nord, 271

Laboulaye, M.—
Report on Education Bill, 116
Report on Public Powers Bill, 274
Senate Bill, Views on, 172
Speech on Constitution of Government, 3, 4
Speech on Public Powers Bill, 144–146
Support of Casimir-Perier's motion, 25
Labour Congress, 532
Labour question, The, 65, 70
Founding of the *Prolétaire*, 532, 533
Lanfrey, M., Manifesto of, 436
Laroche-Joubert, M.—Resolution for development of Co-operation, 532
Latour, M. de Caryon—Speech of Jan. 1875, 135, 136
Laussedat, M.—President of the *Union Républicaine*, 571
Lavergne, M. Léonce de—
Career, 415
Letters to the Press, 152
Policy of, 152, 153
League of the Rights of Paris, 210
Le Flô, General—Attitude as Ambassador to Russia in the German crisis, 217, 220
Legitimist Party—
Address of the Marquis de la Rochejacquelein in La Vendée, 460
Circulation of letter from the Comte de Chambord, 110
Deputation at Gorlitz, 584
Position of M. de la Rochette, 367
Protest of M. de la Rochette against Republican Government, 192
Legitimist Party (*continued*)—
Speech of Lucien Brun, 136, 137
Speech of M. de Caryon-Latour, 135, 136
Weakening of, 34, 35
Le Play, M.—Views on Labour question, 66
Lesseps, M. de—
Financial difficulties of the Suez Canal, 389
Hostility of Lord Palmerston towards Suez Canal, 91
Project of Sahara Sea, 62
Littré, M.—Speech on Masonry, 432
Loubet, M. Emile—Candidature at Montélimar, 456
Lockroy, M. Edouard—Labour Union, 532
Lockroy Bill, 68
Lyons—Economical crisis, 590

MacMahon, Marshal—
Advisers of, 609
Attitude towards Gambetta, 557
Constitutional Powers, 41
Critical appreciation of, 464
Criticism by Jules Ferry, 548
Difficulties of the Septennate, 15, 16
Formal demands of Presidential rights, 181
Letter of gratitude to the Czar, 253
Military Manœuvres of 1876, 528
Mistakes of counsellors of, 54, 55
Policy of, 617–621
Presidential Powers, 16, 33
Proclamation of 1876, 436
Refusal to accept resignation of Ministers, 37, 38
Rupture with M. Jules Simon, 613–617
Speech of December 1876, 551–554
Visits to the Provinces, 107
Magne, M.—
Career of, 39, 40
Corrective Budget of Ways and Means, 57
Minister of Finance, 6
Resignation, 40
Marcère, M. de—
Appointment as M. Ricard's successor, 502
President of Left Centre, 571
Speech at Domfront, 530
Martial Law—
Departments under, 404
Four Departments still beneath Martial Law 1876, 495
Speech of M. Challemel-Lacour, 408, 409
Mathieu-Bodet, M., Minister of Finance, 40, 59

Mayors' Law, The, Debate upon, 514, 526
Meaux, M. de—
Interview with the Marshal, 464
Views on Wallon Amendment, 165
Meaux, Vicomte de, *Souvenirs* of, 53, 609
Meglia, Papal Nuncio—Address to Mac-Mahon, 16
Méline, M. Jules—Candidature at Remiremont, 457
Melun, Comte—Report on condition of Labourers, 68
Méplain, M.—Scheme of Conciliatory Combination, 178–185
Michaux, M., appointed Director of the Colonies, 575
Michelet, M., Funeral of, 507
Moltke, Marshal v.—Opinion on the increase of the French Army, 237
Monarchical Party—
Conciliatory motion of M. Lucien Brun, 9
Difficulties of, 151, 152
Liquefaction of, 392–401
Manifesto of the Comte de Chambord, 31
Manifesto of Don Carlos, 82
Resolution of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Bisaccia, 26, 32
Montaignac, Admiral, Minister for the Marine, 6
Morgan Loan, Conversion of, 260
Mun, Comte de—
Defence of Catholic position, 488, 489
Strongly Catholic address at Pontivy, 459
Municipal Council, The—Opinions of MM. Floquet and Clemenceau, 454
Municipal Electoral Bill, 8
Municipal Electorate Bills—Amendments of M. Lucien Brun, 21
Municipal Organisation Bill, 8, 9, 27, 28, 29, 589, 610

Napoleon, Prince—Contest against M. Rouher at Ajaccio, 461
Napoleon, Prince Jerome—Denunciation of clerical influences, 537
Naquet, M.—
Progressive programme, 452, 453
Strong Republican Speech, 530
National Assembly—
Dissolution, 412
First Meeting at Bordeaux, 1
Summary of Work accomplished, 412–419
National Unity, 337–339
Noailles, Marquis de—Appointment as Ambassador to Italy, 530
Non-commissioned Officers, Improved condition of, 60
Noury, Admiral La Roncière le—Incident at Evreux, 367

Orénoque, Incident of, 79, 80
Orleanist Party—
Attack of M. Raoul Duval, 407
Letter of the Comte de Paris on Constitutional Crisis of 1875, 151
Preponderance in Cabinet, 39, 40
Reasons of defeat, 341
Orleans, Bishop of. (See Dupanloup, Mgr.)
Orloff, Prince—
Conferring of Grand Cordon of Legion of Honour, 88
Russian Ambassador in Paris—Conversation with Bismarck, 74, 75

Palmerston, Lord—Hostility towards de Lesseps, 91, 92
Paris, Comte de—
Attitude during Constitutional crisis, 1875, 151
Confidants of, 6
Parliament—Inauguration of 1876, 483, 484
Parliamentarism, 342
Power of, 351–353
Responsibilities, 353
Parliamentary Electoral Bill, 8
Passy, M. Louis—Candidature as a Constitutionalist, 458
Pasteur, M., Pension Grant accorded to, 62
Pays, Le, Suspension of, 18
Pazzis, M., Defeat of, as Legitimist, 7
Peace, Society of the Friends of—Banquet to Mr. Richard, 98
Périn, M. Georges—Views upon Colonial expansion, 95, 96
Philastre Treaty. (See Annam.)
Phylloxera, Ravages of, 64, 65
Pius IX., Pope—
Affair of *L'Orénoque*, 80
Attitude towards Bismarck, 78
Friction with M. Jules Simon, 608
Weakness of, 428
Plébiscite, The, Origin of, 294, 295
Plœuc, M. de—Report concerning French subjects in Egypt, 95
Postal Congress at Berne, 101
Pourtalès, Comte de—Vote for Wallon Amendment, 48
Presidential Powers—Introduction of M. Wallon's Bill, 26
Press, The—
Discussion of Press Bill, 375, 611, 612
Founding of *La Défense Sociale et Religieuse*, 529

Press, The (*continued*)—
Founding of the *Lanterne*, 575
Founding of the *Prolétaire*, 532
Influence of *La Réforme* on Labour question, 532
Liberty of, 354, 575, 576, 587, 588
Prosecution of Manager of *Droits de l'Homme*, 575
Prosecution question, 575, 587, 588
Suspension of *Le Pays*, *Rappel*, and *XIXième Siècle*, 18
Violence of M. de Cassagnac, 587
Prévost-Paradol, M.—*La France Nouvelle*, 318–321
Prisons, The—
Bill read on Cellular System, 271
Pardons Committee, 404
Prisoners of War, Society for Improving Condition of—Invitation to Powers for International Conference, 98
Provinces, The—
Attitude of rural populations, 426
Divergences of feeling, 423
Public Powers Bill, 262, 273
Public Worship Bill, 536

Quinet, Edgar—
Funeral of, 204

Radical Programme, 455
Radical Propaganda, 269
Radowitz, Herr v.—Mission to St. Petersburg, 221–225
Railways—
Committee of Inquiry into, 62
Concessions to Local railways, 272
Concession to M. Chevalier for Submarine Railway between France and England, 272
Inquiry into, 582
Monopoly question, 589, 590
Rampon, Comte de—Personality, 416
Rappel, Le, Suspension of, 18
Raspail, M.—Inaugural address in the Chamber of Deputies, 473
Raudot, M.—Proposals of priority as to Bills, 8
Religious Question, The, 116–120, 263–266
Attitude of the Assembly, 417, 418
Attitude of the Bishop of Versailles, 372
Attitude of the Comte de Mun, 488, 489
Clerical influence in elections, 488–491
Consecration of the Cult of the Sacred Heart, 264
Electoral address at Pontivy of the Comte de Mun, 459

Religious Question, The (*continued*)—
Excitement roused by M. Waddington's Bill, 510, 511
Foundation of the votive Church of Montmartre, 264
Founding of *La Défense Sociale et Religieuse*, 529
Incident of the Jesuit School, Rue des Postes, 522
Letter from Pius IX to Mgr. Dupanloup, 371
M. Dufaure on Public Worship, 538, 539
M. Keller in the Haut-Rhin, 459
Motion for suppression of military chaplains, 586
Power of the Clergy among the people, 427
Public Worship Bill, 536
Repression of monetary abuses, 529
Rider of M. de Belcastel to Clause I. of Constitutional Bill, 275
Sermon of Mgr. Pie in Rheims, 528
Speech of Gambetta, 600–602
Speech of M. Simon, 597–600
Ultramontane intrigues, 596, 597
Rénault, M. Léon—
Attitude in the Bourgoing election, 268
Career and Personality, 458
Prefect of Police, 268
Renouard, M. Jules—Director of the Crédit Foncier, 574
Republic, The—
Cabinet Council of, 349–351
Casimir-Perier's motion for Proclamation of, 22–25
Constitution of, 276
Declaration of, 193
Extreme programme of M. Naquet's party, 453
Gambetta's speech upon, 51
Laurent-Pichat programme, 440
Majority for, 163
Manifesto of M. Lanfrey, 436, 437
Moderation of Gambetta at Belleville, 531
M. Wallon's Proposition for regulating Presidential powers, 26, 27
Parliamentarism of, 341–345
Personal Policy of MacMahon, 617–621
Policy of Duc de Broglie, 32, 38
Position of the Moderates 1876, 544
Presidency of, 345–349
Programme of, 449
Programme of Gambetta, 369, 370
Regulations as to Presidential powers in foreign relations, 276

Republic, The (*continued*)—
Victory of Casimir-Perier's motion, 25, 26
Reservists, Call to, in 1875, 371
Revolution, Claims of, 324
Ricard, M.—
Appointment as Minister of the Interior, 481
Sudden death, 501
Richard, Mr. Henry—Banquet of the Society of Friends of Peace, 98
Propaganda for International Arbitration, 98
Rifle Clubs, Organisation of, 61
Rive, M.—Vote for Wallon Amendment, 48
Rochefort, M. Henri—
Founder of the *Lanterne*, 575
Incriminating articles in the *Droits de l'Homme*, 575
Rochefoucauld-Bisaccia, Duc de la—
Candidature at Mamers, 459
Resolution for Restoration of Monarchy, 26, 32
Rochejacquelein, Marquis de la—
Candidature in La Vendée, 460
Protest against Clause V. of Public Powers Bill, 191
Rochette, M. de la—
Death, 403
Letter to *L'Union* on the Senatorial question, 401, 402
Position in the Senatorial question, 397–399
Reply to M. Callet, 367
Roman Question, The—
Anti-clerical Speech of Gambetta at Lille, 447, 448
Attitude of the Clergy, 427–430
Bismarck and the Ecclesiastical Laws, 77, 78
Catholic Meeting, 593
Debate on Embassy to the Vatican, 536
Official regret for publication of Archbishop's letter against the Government of Victor Emmanuel, 79
Papal Consistory, 591
Papal Investiture Bill 1876, 529
Recall of the *Orénoque*, 79, 80
Views of Decazes, 102
Rouher, M.—
Attitude in the Girerd Incident, 17
Explanation at Ajaccio of Bonapartist attitude, 368
Position and difficulties, 121, 122, 123
Roussel Law for Protection of Infants, 70, 71
Roussin, Admiral Baron—Appointed Under-Secretary of State for the Navy, 575
Royalist Trust Fund, 434
Russia—
Anti-Prussian feeling, 86
Refusal to acknowledge Spanish Government, 85
Strong feeling of Czar in the International Military Conference, 99
Visit of Schuwaloff to Berlin, 230
Visit of the Czar to Berlin, 245, 246

Sacré Cœur—Consecration of Cult, 264
Sahara Sea—Project of M. de Lesseps, 62
Sainte-Croix, Comte de—Attack on Gambetta at the Gare St. Lazare, 18
Salon, The. (See Art.)
Savary, M. (See Bourgoing Election.)
Say, M. Léon—
Difference with M. Buffet, 365
Minister of Finance in Dufaure Cabinet, 482
Programme of 1876, 435
Schuwaloff, Count—Interview with Decazes, 88, 89
Second Chamber, Discussion on, 140–142. (See Senate.)
Senate Bill, The, 170–174, 189, 190, 191
Senate, The—
Election of Life Senators, 392–401
Election of M. Chesnelong, 539
Financial rights of, 564
Functions of, 344, 345
Senators at Versailles, 475
The Duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier elected President, 570
Senators, Bill for Election of, 262, 273, 279, 280
Senegal—Right of Representation, 582
XIXème Siècle, Suspension of, 18
Simon, M. Jules—
Anti-Bonapartist character of Cabinet, 568
Cabinet of, 560
Offer of the Presidency of the Council, 556
Rupture with the Marshal, and resignation, 613–617
Speech on Religious question, 597–600
Visit to Italy, 592
Simplon, Tunnelling of, 62
Social Questions—
Children's Labour, 69, 70
Co-operation, development of, 532

Social Questions (*continued*)—
Crisis at Lyons, 590
Inspectors of factories appointed, 70
Labour Congress in Paris, 532
M. Lockroy on Labour Union, 325
Passing of Roussel Law for protection of infants, 70, 71
Socialism, 424
Society, Effect of prosperity upon, 105, 106, 107
Sociology, Exponents of, 312, 317
Spain—
Carlist movement of 1874, 81, 82
German intervention supporting demands of Spain on the French Government, 82
Manifesto of Alfonso, 84
Staunton, Major-General—Purchase of Shares from Khedive, 390
Submarine Railway, Concession granted for, between England and France, 272
Suez Canal—
Difficulties with England, 91, 92
Financial and technical difficulties, 92, 93

Tailhand, M.—Minister of Justice, 6
Target, M.—Vote for Wallon amendment, 48
Thiers, M.—
Government of, 2
Overthrow of, 2
Speech at Arcachon, 368
Tocqueville, de—On abuses of democracy, 313, 337
Tocqueville, Comte de—Speech in favour of the Republic, 192, 193
Tonquin. (See Annam, 95.)
Trévenec Law, The, 323
Turigny, M., Election of, in the Nièvre, 7

Union, l', Suspension of, 33
Union Républicaine—M. Laussedat President, 571
United States—Imperialistic tendencies, 97
Universal Postal Union created at Berne, 1874, 101
Universal Suffrage—
Bill passed for, 30
General opinion as to, 11, 12, 287
M. Jouin's speech in favour of, 29
New organisation of, 277
Position before 1876, 421, 422
Theory of, 330–333
Tocqueville, de, on abuses of, 336

Valfons, Marquis de—Answer to accusation of desire for war on the part of the Catholics, 59
Vannes, Bishop of—Letter to the Comte de Mun, during electoral campaign, 488
Vega de Armijo, Marquis de la—
Accredited Spanish ambassador in France, 83
Note to Duc Decazes upon Carlist difficulties, 83
Ventavonate, 41
Ventavon Bill, 41, 134, 163–173
Second discussion, 143
Ventavon, M. de—
Bill of, 41, 134, 135, 163,–173
Character, 416
Versailles—Home of the Senate, 475
Victoria, Queen—Pers nal appeals to German Emperor in favour of peace during Franco-German friction of 1875, 91
Vitet, M.—Recommendation to Monarchical Party, 151, 152
Volontariat, The, 502

Waddington, M.—
Facilities of primary education, 575
Higher education, programme for, 500, 501, 509
Minister of Education in Dufaure Cabinet, 482
Progressive formulas in popular education, 500, 501
Proposed scheme for Universal Exhibition of Fine Arts, 495
Schools Fund Bill, 582
Senate Bill, proposals for, 175, 181
Wallon proposition, 26, 27
Wallon, M. Henri—
Amendment on the Casimir-Perier proposition, 47
Amendment, Speech on his, 154, 155
Amendment to Constitutional Bill, Final form of, 159
Career and character, 154
Constitutional Bill of, 26, 27, 185, 186
Constitutional Bill, Amendments of, 27, 27, 149, 155, 159–161, 168
Decrees supporting State education, 371
Minister for Public Education in Buffet Cabinet, 201
Personality, 154
Second amendment for Constitutional Bill, 164

Wallon, M. Henri (*continued*)—
Second amendment to Ventavon Bill, 164
Speech in crisis of Jan. 1875, 154, 155
Voters for amendment of, 48, 161
War, Ministers for—
Berthaut, General, 560
Cissey, General de, 6, 201, 482
War of 1870–1871. (See Army.)
War of 1871—Compensation for damages, 60
Waterways—Committee of Inquiry into, 62
William, Emperor. (See headings Germany and Foreign Relations.)
Wimpffen, General—Action against M. de Cassagnac, 197
Witt, M. Cornélius de—Appointment as Under-Secretary of State for the Interior, 40
Women's Rights. (See M. Naquet's programme, 453.)
Wyrouboff, M.—Treatise on Education, 432

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

Richard Clay & Sons, Limited, London and Bungay.

00031474

Digitized with financial assistance from

H T Parekh
FOUNDATION

An Initiative by
HDFC
WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH

on 28 December, 2018